

ISLAM IS THE RELIGION OF PEACE

By:

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Introduction

“Terrorism” is of two kinds: terrorism that is evil based upon wicked tyrannical acts, and terrorism that is good and desired based on necessary and justified acts. The terrorism that is evil is injustice, double standards, tyranny, and aggression, in all the hateful connotations that these words imply. It targets women and children, civilians and non-combatants, trying to force defeat and difficult political decisions by spreading terror. This kind is what most people immediately think about when hearing the word terrorism. Often people associate it with what they have been preconditioned to picture by various government agencies and segments of the mass media. Muslims are routinely portrayed as terrorists even though many are either totally innocent of the charge or are more innocent than many of their antagonists who aggress against them. “Muslim terrorism” is a media and think tank byword, even though one would be hard pressed to find the equivalent term of Jewish, Christian, Hindu or Buddhist terrorism in usage. Certain institutions and individuals - with known agendas and backings - have been instrumental in fabricating and perpetuating misinformation, exaggeration, and previously disqualified and refuted misunderstandings and slanders.

The terrorism that is desired and based on necessary and justified acts is enforcing the rule of just laws, providing fair punishments commensurate to the crimes committed, and preparing and defending against attacks, aggression, and corruption. It is used against the criminal evildoers themselves, and never targets women, children and non-combatants. We use the word “terrorism” here in a new and positive connotation, perhaps unimagined by the reader. In this positive sense terror is rightfully struck into the hearts of the evildoers, the enemies of Allah, as a deterrent so that they will fear a quick and harsh retribution for any evil acts they perpetrate or conspire to enact. In this sense only it is termed terrorism, although just and beneficial terrorism condoned in principle as legitimate by all universally. Allah (ﷻ) says in the Majestic Qur’an about the justified form of terrorism which we are speaking of and which prevents and deters aggression:

﴿Make ready against them your strength to the utmost of your power, including steeds of war, to strike terror into the hearts of the enemies of God and your enemies, and others besides them whom you may not know but whom God knows well. Whatever you spend in the cause of God will be repaid unto you, and you will not be treated unjustly.﴾
(8:60)

One might claim that we are using terror here in its linguistic meaning and outside the scope of the technical legal definition of terrorism, but since that definition is hotly under contention because no universally accepted standard has been agreed upon, since many grievances against the hypocrisy and double standards of the major powers that are coming more and more into light, and since might is still not considered legally right, the point we are emphasizing is a return to universal common sense: terror can have a negative and a positive sense according to circumstance and context.

Terrorism invariably does not arise in a vacuum but in a historical context of persecutions, injustices, and grievances that build up over time to the point of explosion and rebellion. A common form of undeniable terrorism is state terrorism, but this is often purposely neglected or downgraded in legal and government sponsored examinations of the issues surrounding terrorism for the simple fact that those who hold power often do not wish that their

institutional and party crimes are exposed as crimes against humanity and as incidents of state terrorism. That their agendas of labeling others but not their own operatives as criminals and terrorists are not discovered. Is clandestine assassination and murder a form of terrorism? Is torture and rape a form of terrorism? Is deliberate military, political, economic and environmental sabotage resulting in mass death a form of terrorism? Are wholesale persecutions of one racial or ethnic group or one class with lynching, killing and beatings of some others terrorism? Is target bombing a form of terrorism? Is the use of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction on major population centers a form of terrorism? What is justifiable collateral damage? If these acts are not terrorism, then what are they exactly? If they are not legal and justified, then what do we call numerous examples around the globe during the 20th century of unprecedented human wars and mass destruction? What do they call the implemented policies of what is coerced upon the world nowadays in this 21st century, and which some neo-conservative minded pundits call the “Project For a New American Century,” and related “PAX AMERICANA”? Many difficult issues remain under investigation and contention, and demand serious and reasonable answers from scholars and politicians alike.

Many of the national and secular governments and systems claim to champion human rights, peace, prosperity, and happiness for man, but in reality we see that they practice narrow national and party politics meant to empower and enrich selected groups, and that they are inherently fragmented and self contradictory by seeking to serve various special interest groups while professing to serve the general public good. The legislations of these regimes and agencies enact laws and policies that serve the interests of power and wealth in their societies. The social, political, economic, and environmental consequences of unchecked power and greed for profit and luxury is detrimental to the majority of mankind and is leading humanity in general to irreversible devastation and destruction.

Islam, on the other hand, is a comprehensive and universal religion for all races and classes of people not inclined to serve a specific category or group of people but specially aimed to address the needs of all humanity with its moral, spiritual, social, legal, political and economic systems. Its moral purity and clarity, simplicity in a strict monotheistic creed and faith, and comprehensive prohibition of all types of criminality, oppression and injustice appeals to all classes and categories of people, regardless of race, culture, education, social and economic status. The aim of Islam is to establish the ideal human society and brotherhood spreading general benevolence and the divine guidance among men for their betterment and salvation. Part of its mission is to establish justice at all times and at all levels, to maintain amicable relations even with potential enemies as long as there are no open acts of hostilities, and to promote peace whenever possible. Allah the Almighty states in the Glorious Qur’an:

﴿It may be that God will grant love and friendship between you and those whom you hold as enemies. For God has power over all things; And God is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful. God forbids you not, with regard to those who do not fight you for your Faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them: for God loves those who are just. God only forbids you, with regard to those who fight you for your Faith, and drive you out of your homes, and support others in driving you out, from turning to them for friendship and protection. Those who turn to them (in these circumstances) do wrong.﴾ (60:7-9)

These verses call for peace with those that refrain from the hostile actions mentioned.

And Allah Most Glorified said in His Majestic Qur'an:

﴿If they incline towards peace, then incline towards peace, and trust in God, for He is All-Hearing and All-Knowing.﴾ (8:61)

This verse states that whenever the enemy inclines towards peace it is incumbent on the Muslims to incline towards peace.

It is hoped that researchers and scholars will investigate Islam and its laws and principles with impartiality and thoughtful reflection. The true beauty and awesomeness of Islam is only evident in fuller vitality to those who live by it and practice it, but all students can admire just laws, universal brotherhood, noble and rational principles, and excellent moral examples of purity, uprightness, truthfulness, generosity, courageousness, and justice. One of the evidences of the greatness of this Divine faith is that, regardless of the weak support extended by the followers of Islam and the vast war waged against it by its vicious critics and enemies; it has resisted corruption and distorting innovations, and continues to spread on its own merits and values in various parts of the world. What is behind this expansion of Islam, despite the weaknesses of the Muslims, except the inherent strength of the truth and justice that by nature dissipates and conquers all falsehood and injustice? In Islam people find full satisfaction that includes both their spiritual and moral, and their physical and practical expectations and needs.

As for the people who refuse to open their eyes, see, hear and investigate the truth, they will undoubtedly remain mired in false desires, narrow biasness and ignorant prejudices. A well-known principle is that man by nature rejects that which he fears. He fears that which he is ignorant about, and therefore, makes enemies of what he does not know. Allah has described them in the Glorious Qur'an saying:

﴿Many are the jinn and men We have made for Hellfire: they have hearts wherewith they understand not, eyes wherewith they see not, ears wherewith they hear not. They are like cattle. Nay! They are even more misguided. They are the heedless and neglectful.﴾ (7:179)

Cattle follow blindly, but at least they follow the natural laws and instincts created by Allah for their survival while many of men follow blindly custom and their leaders, rejecting what Allah has revealed for man's own benefit and salvation. As Allah mentions:

﴿Nay! They say: We found our fathers following a certain religion, and we do guide ourselves by their footsteps.﴾

(43:22)

I do hope and pray that Allah, the Exalted, will bring benefit from what we read, hear and say. Ours is a humble effort, presented with a pure intent, to contribute to the wealth of human information and to advance understandings. The writer offers, in addition, an open invitation to all those who are interested in learning more about Islam to communicate with him at the address given, and would be delighted to answer all inquiries about Islam and provide additional literature on it.

The author expresses his deep gratitude to Allah Most Exalted for His continuing aid. Any and all shortcomings and omissions in this booklet are his for which he takes responsibility, and requests from all the readers forgiveness, and seeks the pardon and forgiveness from Allah the Most Merciful.

May Allah's Blessings and Mercy be upon the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) the final Prophet and Messenger of Allah to mankind, and may the blessings and peace of Allah also be upon his family and companions and all those who follow their guidance and the footprints until the Day of Judgment.

Dr.Abdur-Rahman Abdul-Kareem Al-Sheha

The Meaning of Islam

The word Islam means submission to Allah the Almighty, the Creator and Lord of all creation, with the entire soul and body, by obedience to what He commanded and prohibited in His Revealed Law, by compliance and willful yielding of one's will to His Will and Judgments, and by acceptance of all that Allah has predestined for man on earth. Allah is the Most Beneficent and Merciful who knows all man's rightful needs, who enjoins all that is good and warns against all that is evil. Thus His revealed Law is perfectly suited to the universal needs, rights and responsibilities of man.

The Almighty Allah states in the Glorious Qur'an in relation to the Prophet Ibraheem (Abraham) (ﷺ):

﴿Behold! His Lord said to him: Submit (aslim). He said: I submit (aslamtu) to the Lord and Cherisher of the Universe.﴾ (2:131)

The word "Salam" means "Peace" and is derived from the same Arabic three-letter root **SLM** as the word Islam. "Salam" is one of the Attributes of Allah, blessed be His Names and Attributes and Exalted His Majesty, as the Qur'an states:

﴿Allah is He, there is no other god except Him; the Sovereign, the Holy One, the Source of Peace (and Perfection), the Guardian of Faith, the Preserver of Safety, the Exalted in Might, the Irresistible, the Supreme: Glory is to Allah! High is He above the partners they attribute to Him.﴾ (59:23)

"Salam" is also one of the names of Jannah (Paradise). The Almighty Allah states in the Glorious:

﴿For them will be a Home of Peace with their Lord. He will be their Friend, because they practiced righteousness.﴾ (6:127)

The inhabitants of Paradise will greet each other with "Salam" when they meet their Lord, Allah as he mentioned:

﴿Their salutation on the Day they meet Him will be "Peace" and He has prepared for them a generous Reward.﴾ (35:44)

Muslims exchange the purified and noble greetings "As-Salamu Alaikum" (Peace be upon you) when they meet, when they pass by one another, when they call one another. Even when a Muslim enters his own home and finds no one there, he says as-Salamu Alaikum since he offers this greeting upon the angels who are present in that place and upon himself. This form

of greeting helps to relieve the hearts from all forms of enmity and grudges and rancor people may keep within them, replacing it with good will, mutual respect, tranquility, security and happiness. Often Muslims greet one another by saying the fuller version, which has been taught by the Prophet of Allah: 'As-Salamu Alaikum wa rahmatul'laah' i.e. **“May Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon you, and His Mercy.”**

In the Prophetic traditions (hadith) we find the words of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) which make the spreading of this greeting from among the traits of the perfection of faith:

“You would not enter Paradise until you acquire full faith, and you would not acquire full faith until you love one another. Should not I guide you to an action which if you establish among one another, you would love one another? Spread the greeting of “Salaam” (Peace) as much as you can amongst yourselves (in the community).” (Muslim)

And the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“Offer food generously to others, initiate the greeting of “peace” amongst yourselves to those whom you know and those whom you do not know.” (Bukhari & Muslim)

The purpose of Islam is to continually seek to please Allah, the Creator and Lord of the Universe, by universal good and righteous deeds. Allah says in his Glorious Book, the Qur'an:

﴿O People of the Book! There has come to you Our Messenger revealing to you much that you used to hide in the Book, and passing over much (that is now unnecessary). There has come to you from Allah a light and a clear Book by which Allah guides all who seek His pleasure to ways of “salam” (peace and safety), leads them out of darkness, by His Will, to the light, and guides them to a Path that is Straight.﴾ (5:15-16)

Islam comprises the complete comprehensive meaning of peace that includes the inner personal and spiritual peace and the outer social peace. As the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“A true Muslim is the person from whom other Muslims feel secured against abuse and attacks from his tongue and hands, and a true immigrant is a person who forsakes what Allah the Almighty has declared unlawful.” (Bukhari & Muslim)

Moreover, it includes the global vision of general universal peace for all humanity, since its basic principles include stability, mutual respect, and non-aggression to those who abide peacefully to just terms, especially those who have the basic understanding of a revealed religion from Allah as the basis of their civilization like the Christians and Jews.

﴿O you who believe! Enter into “as-Silm” (the peace of Islam by submission to Allah) completely and whole-heartedly, and do not follow the footsteps of the Satan, for he is indeed an avowed enemy to you.﴾ (2:208)

The invitation of Islam, Allah's universal religion, is extended to all. Allah Most Exalted said in His Majestic Book:

﴿Say (O Muhammad) 'O mankind! Verily, I am sent to you all as the Messenger of Allah...﴾ (7:158)

And He (ﷻ) said:

﴿Truly the religion before Allah is Islam.﴾ (3:19)

And He (ﷻ) said:

﴿And Whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted of him, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers.﴾ (3:85)

The Misconception that Islam was spread by Force

One misconception, promoted by the enemies of justice who do not read of the historical sources impartially but rehash old propaganda over and over again, is the false accusation that Islam was spread by compulsion and coercion. Various scriptures from the Majestic Qur'an can rebut this vile slander.

Allah Most Exalted says in His Majestic Book:

﴿Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from Error: whoever rejects Taghoot (Satan, idols, tyrants, etc) and believes in Allah, has grasped the most trustworthy hand hold that never breaks. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.﴾ (2:256)

And He, the Most Exalted, says:

﴿If it had been your Lord's Will, they all would have believed, all the people on earth! Will you then compel mankind, against their will, to believe!﴾ (10:99)

And He, the Most Exalted, says:

﴿Say, The Truth is from your Lord: Let him who will, believe, and let him who will, reject and disbelieve. We have prepared for the wrongdoers a Fire whose smoke and flames, like the wall and roof of a tent, will overwhelm them. If they implore for relief they will be granted water like melted brass that will scald their faces. How dreadful a drink! And how uncomfortable a couch to recline on!﴾ (18:29)

And He, the Most Exalted, says:

﴿But if they turn away, your duty is only to preach the Clear Message.﴾ (16:82)

And He, the Most Exalted, says:

﴿Therefore give admonition, for you are indeed one to admonish. But you are not one to manage the affairs.﴾

(88:21-22)

And He, the Most Exalted, says:

﴿Say: Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger: but if you turn away, he is only responsible for the duty placed on him, as you are likewise responsible for the duty placed on you. If you obey him, you shall be on right guidance. The Messenger's duty is only to preach the clear Message.﴾ (24:54)

And He, the Most Exalted, says:

﴿If one of the pagan idolators ask you for asylum, grant it to him, so that he may hear the word of Allah, then escort him to where he can be secure. That is because they are men without knowledge.﴾ (9:6)

These and many other verses of the Qur'an and teachings of Prophetic traditions make it clear that no coercion or compulsion in religion is allowed: no one is ever to be forced against his will to convert to Islam. Faith must be by knowledge and free will and based upon firm conviction in the heart, followed by the testimony of correct words and good deeds. A mere pronouncement on the lips of the creed of Islam, "LA ILAHA ILLALLAH" (There is no god except Allah (that is worthy of being worshipped) - is not enough to confirm one as a believer, even thought, if said with the kernel of initial faith, one immediately becomes a Muslim. As Allah said about the Bedouins who professed verbally without firm conviction:

﴿The desert Arabs say: ‘We believe.’ Say: ‘You do not yet have real Faith, but rather say only: ‘We have submitted to Allah (aslamna: we are Muslims),’ since Faith has not yet entered your hearts. But if you obey Allah and His Messenger, He will not slight you (the reward) of your deeds: for Allah is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful.﴾

(48:14)

It is known that someone cannot be forced to change what is in the depths of his heart, and that one may profess with his tongue what he does not really believe with certainty: this is not Islam nor Islamic faith. For this reason Allah said the following about the one compelled under torture to renounce his faith in Islam:

﴿Anyone who utters words of disbelief after accepting Faith in Allah - except under compulsion while his heart remains firm in Faith - such as one who opens his breast to disbelief, on them is Wrath from Allah, and there will be a dreadful Penalty for them.﴾
(16:106)

Disbelief occurs by opening the heart to disbelieve willingly, and upon this basis, one speaks evil and commits his criminal acts rebelling against Allah and the revealed guidance of the Messengers and becomes an apostate after being a Muslim.

Another accusation related to the above is that Islam was spread by force of arms and warfare. It is an established fact that any system or government, regardless of its source, requires a protective force to defend its adherents, preserve its values, spread its principles, ensure a fair application of its law, and enforce the just execution of legal penalties against criminals and those who rebel against the system. As reported in the tradition of the Prophet (ﷺ):

“Truly, Allah admonishes with the authority of the ruler, more than what He admonishes with the Divine Revelation of the Qur’an” (i.e. more by enforcing the punishments justly than the God-consciousness from reading scripture) (al-Hindi, Kanz-ul-Aámaal)

Let us take a glimpse of the early days of Islam and its amazing spread over the known world to analyze the truth of this accusation in the light of documented historical fact. The Messenger of Allah Muhammad (ﷺ) after his commission from Allah to arise and publicize his divine message, remained in the sacred city of Makkah for thirteen years inviting his people of the Quraish tribe and the visitors of Makkah to Islam. He engaged every possible way to inform and convey the message of the revelations of the Qur’an and the Sunnah, encountering false accusations, slander, persecutions, harassment, boycotts, threats, attacks, and brutal physical aggression from his people. Those who believed shared in his sufferings, and since he was not yet commanded by Allah to meet violence and aggression with armed defense, his followers persevered and suffered the harshest forms of persecutions withholding their hands and adhering to the precepts of peaceful missionary activity. Many were tortured and some were martyred for their faith in Islam, and the accounts of these brave souls bear testimony to the long sufferings his followers endured in this period of severe testing. The

Prophet soothed the wounds of his companion Ammar ibn Yasir and his parents who eventually became the first martyrs of Islam with the words:

“Be patient, O family of Yaser! Paradise will be your permanent abode” (Al-Hakim)

The Prophet (ﷺ) allowed those of his followers that wished to immigrate to Ethiopia to escape from this oppression and torture. They sought refuge under the tutelage of its just ruler of the era, the Najashi, who eventually accepted Islam. Even in these dire circumstances Allah the Most Wise and Merciful commanded His Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ) to be patient, forbearing and tolerant with his people while propagating the message. There are repeated examples of his exceeding mercy, graciousness, magnanimity, and compassion in the face of this continued violence and aggression. The Prophet and his companions stood firm in their belief and conveyance of the message, obeying the following command of Allah:

﴿Therefore patiently preserve, as did all the Messengers of inflexible purpose; and be in no haste about the disbelievers. On the Day that they see the Punishment promised to them, it will be as if they had not tarried more than an hour in a single day. Your duty is but to proclaim the Message. None shall be destroyed except those who transgress.﴾
(46:35)

And still he would pray for their guidance saying: **“O Allah! Please guide my people as they know nothing.”**

The Prophet (ﷺ) continued to propagate the message in Makkah, and to seek out any tribe that would be able to protect and aid him: he would present himself and his mission to the visiting individuals and tribes in Makkah and at the times of the great Arab markets and meeting places. Then it so happened that a group of the people of the city of Yathrib, (nowadays known as “Madinah,” City of the Prophet) believed in the Message of Islam and gave him their pledge of allegiance to support and defend him in the same way as they would defend their own wealth, honor, integrity and household, if he were to seek refuge and immigrate with his band of believers to their hometown. This coincided with the persecution in Makkah reaching a grave critical stage, and the leaders of the Quraish tribe even conspired to murder the Prophet, may Allah’s peace and blessing be upon him. The event of immigration was to be the watershed in Islamic history, for in Madinah the Prophet’s first mosque was built, the brotherhood of Muslims expanded and grew, and the nascent Islamic state was established and developed under his direct guidance.

Note that Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and his followers never shed a drop of blood in retribution throughout these long years of persecution and oppression in the city of Makkah since he was not commanded to fight, but rather to be patient and persevere. Confrontation and armed hostilities from the Muslim side did not begin until two years after his immigration from Makkah to Madinah, when the Quraish tribe feared for its dominance and continued on the path of persecution and obstruction of the message of Islam, and after all avenues of peaceful propagation were exhausted.

Since the town of Madinah was enroute of the Quraish tribe’s merchant caravans to Greater Syria, the first act of confrontation occurred when Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) engaged a

commercial caravan lead by the Quraishi nobleman Abu Sufyan. The Prophet (ﷺ) intended to impose a kind of economic sanction on the tribe of Quriash to allow him to peacefully propagate his faith to others in the open, and to compensate the believers for the properties, possessions and wealth which were unjustly confiscated by the Quraish in Makkah before the immigration. The caravan escaped the ambush but after learning about the incident the leaders of Quraish prepared a relatively large and well-equipped army to attack the Muslims. Consequently the first decisive battle took place at Badr, and the smaller and ill equipped Muslim force of 313 fighters crushed the arrogant Quraish army with a humiliating and decisive defeat.

Allah Most Exalted and Supreme, describes the just rationale for this battle and those to follow:

«(They are) those who have been expelled from their homes unjustly, only because they say ‘Our Lord is Allah.’ If Allah did not check one set of people by means of another, many monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques, in which the name of Allah is commemorated in abundant measure, would surely have been pulled down. Allah will certainly aid those who aid His cause. Indeed Allah is Full of Strength, Exalted in Might. (They are) those who, if We establish them in the land, establish regular prayer, give regular charity, enjoin the right and forbid the wrong. And with Allah rests the end and decision of all affairs.» (22:40-41)

And Allah the Wise and Sublime says:

«And why shouldn’t you fight in the cause of Allah, and for those who, being weak, are persecuted and oppressed? Men, women, and children, whose cry is: ‘Our Lord! Rescue us from this town, whose people are oppressors, and raise for us, from Yourself, a protector, and raise for us, from Yourself, a helper!’» (4:75)

And Allah the Exalted says:

«Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for Allah loves not transgressors.»

(2:190)

In all the battles fought and all the victories that Allah's Messenger and his companions achieved within the period of twenty-three years of the Prophet's mission in Makkah and then in Medinah, only three hundred and seventy five people were killed in this fighting. In the ninth year of the Hijra (Immigration) known as the Year of Delegations, the Prophet (ﷺ) met with about a hundred various delegations from tribes over the entire Arabian Peninsula to confer and negotiate with the Prophet (ﷺ). He met them with generosity and magnanimity and replied to all their questions and concerns about the Islamic Creed (Aqeedah) and Law

(Shari'ah). The majority of them were suitably impressed by the call of the Prophet (ﷺ) and they accepted Islam. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) also sent letters to the leaders of the surrounding regions calling them to accept the Message of Allah as will be mentioned below.

In the Prophet's lifetime and soon afterwards, the entire Arabian Peninsula was for the first time in its history unified in one just and egalitarian rule of law and divine religion. The majority of Arabs accepted Islam willfully in droves after hearing the Qur'an, seeing the example of the Prophet in his Sunnah (Way) and his companions, and witnessing the Islamic system, with only a few holdouts among some Jewish and Christian pockets, allowed to remain within the Islamic State on their old faith by contract stipulating specific rights and obligations and the payment of the Jizya tax in lieu of the state's protection and not participating in military service. Indeed this revolutionary change was a miraculous achievement considering the meager material means by which it took place and its lasting worldwide effect, and Allah Most Great gives success to whom He will.

The rightly-guided Caliphs, companions and righteous predecessors followed the example of the Prophet after his demise, defending the Islamic State from its enemies, conquering the surrounding tyrannical empires which threatened their existence and spreading Islam by the zeal of their faith and missionary activity and with their excellent upright morals and just relations. These individuals were, by no standards, equal in number or war equipment, preparations, and professional military skills, to the people they vanquished, but the vitality of their divine faith and mission and moral superiority of their characters conquered the common people's hearts and minds before there was a need to vanquish the corrupt tyrannical armies whose oppression of the masses was unbearable.

One of the new converts (reverts) to Islam in our time, named Basheer Ahmad, said in reflection on this issue: **“One of the most puzzling questions to me, and one of my most serious concerns prior to accepting Islam and embracing it as a way of life, was that we Christians claim that Islam spread by the edge of sword. Therefore, I posed the following question to myself: If that claim is true, why, then, do we notice that many people, in every corner of the world, still adhere to Islam and embrace it, join it, and accept it as a way of life? Why do we notice people come to join Islam daily, without any compulsion or force by anyone?”** [Paraphrased from Dr. Imad-du-Deen Khalil: “What Do They Say about Islam?” p.295]

Norman A. Daniel says on the origins of the fabrication of this myth **“... West formed a more or less invariable canon of beliefs about Islam; it decided for itself what Islam was... The important thing was it suited the West... it gave Christendom self-respect in dealing with a civilization in many ways its superior.”** [Islam and the West: The Making of an Image, p. 270]

De Lacy O'Leary comments on this fallacy: **“History makes it clear, however, that the legend of fanatical Muslims sweeping through the world and forcing Islam at the point of sword upon conquered races is one of the most fantastically absurd myths that historians have ever repeated.”** [Islam at the Crossroads, London, 1923, p. 8]

Dr. Gustav LeBon states in his book **“Civilization of the Arabs [p.127–128]: “...force was never a factor in the spread of the Koranic teachings, and that the Arabs left those they had subdued free to exercise their religious beliefs. If it happened that some Christian peoples embraced Islam and adopted Arabic as their language, it was mainly due to the various kinds of justice on the part of the Arab victors, with the like of which the non-Moslems were not acquainted. It was also due to the tolerance and leniency of Islam, which was unknown to the other religions.”** [Paraphrased from Dr.Imad-du-Deen Khalil: “What Do They Say about Islam? p.314]

He also says: **“...the early Caliphs... were remarkably kind in the way they treated the peoples of Syria, Egypt, Spain and every other country they subdued, leaving them to practice their laws and regulations and beliefs and imposing only a small Jizya in return for their protection and keeping peace among them. In truth, nations have never known merciful and tolerant conquerors like the Arabs.”**

If Islam did spread as a consequence to the wars imposed on the Muslims from those enemies threatening their survival, and the conquests of these oppressive and corrupt regimes that followed consequently, is this unique and unknown in history, especially when compared to other civilizations? What is truly unique of the Islamic conquests is that they are generally liberation from oppression, as in the famous answers that the companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) gave to the Emperor of Persia when he asked them what had brought the Muslims to their lands, as mentioned in the history books: **“Allah has sent us to take whoever wishes from the slavery of mankind to other men, to the servitude and worship of Allah, from the confines of this world to the expanse (which Islam brings to this world and the Hereafter), and from the injustice of the ways of life (of the worldly rulers) to the justice of Islam.”** [see Ibn Katheer, Bidayah wa Nihayah].

In direct contrast to the many examples of massacres, rapes and pillaging, and injustices in history mentioned in the preface, we do not find comparable accounts in the history of these early Islamic conquests.

Thomas Carlyle, in his famous series of lectures, commented on the spread of Islam with the following words: **“Much has been said of Mahomet’s propagating his Religion by the sword. It is no doubt far nobler what we have to boast of the Christian Religion, that it propagated itself peaceably in the way of preaching and conviction. Yet with all, if we take this for an argument of the truth or falsehood of a religion, there is a radical mistake in it. The sword indeed: but where will you get your sword! Every new opinion, at its starting, is precisely in a minority of one. In one man’s head alone, there it dwells as yet. One man alone of the whole world believes it; there is one man against all men. That he take a sword, and try to propagate with that, will do little for him. You must first get your sword! On the whole, a thing will propagate itself as it can. We do not find, of the Christian Religion either, that it always disdained the sword, when once it had got one. Charlemagne’s conversion of the Saxons was not by preaching. I care little about**

the sword: I will allow a thing to struggle for itself in this world, with any sword or tongue or implement it has, or can lay hold of. We will let it preach, and pamphleteer, and fight, and to the uttermost bestir itself, and do, beak and claws, whatsoever is in it; very sure that it will, in the long-run, conquer nothing which does not deserve to be conquered. What is better than itself, it cannot put away, but only what is worse. In this great Duel, Nature herself is umpire, and can do no wrong: the thing which is deepest-rooted in Nature, what we call _truest_, that thing and not the other will be found growing at last.” [‘Heroes, Hero Worship, and the Heroic in History,’ Lecture 2, Friday, 8th May 1840]

In comparison to the above, let us take some passages from the Holy Bible and read what the Jews and Christians hold as sacred and divine guidance about the conduct of war, and which has lead them in times of their expansions and conquests.

We read in the Book of Deuteronomy:

“10/When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it.11/And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee.12/And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it: 13/And when the LORD thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword:14/But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the LORD thy God hath given thee.15/Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations.16/But of the cities of these people, which the LORD thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth: 17/But thou shalt utterly destroy them; namely, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee...” [Deuteronomy 20: 10-17].

On the conquest of the city of Jericho and the fate of the indigenous inhabitants therein we read: **"The people called and used the trumpets so the wall fell in its place, they entered the city and murdered all its people, males, females, children, and the old people, even the cows, goats, and donkeys, using swords."** [Yusha' 6/20]

In the towns of Muqeideh and Labneh, they did the same as in Jericho. [Yusha' 10/28].

A perplexing passage of the Gospel of Mathew on a statement of Jesus (ﷺ) reads: **“Think not that I am come to send peace on earth, I came not to send peace, but a sword.”** [Matt. 10:35-37; and compare Luke 22:36]

What is this sword? Who has the authority to raise it? This is not clear and is hotly contested. Perhaps it will be raised upon his second coming. Until Constantine the early Christians were a persecuted minority apparently committed to non-violence and waiting for his imminent return, but thereafter, when Trinitarian Christianity became the official state religion in the era after Constantine, the sword was welded by the State, and Christian rulers down through history conducted numerous wars and conquests in the name of religion. The Christian principle of obedience to any authority in power is based upon the purported statement of Jesus (ﷺ) to **“render unto Caesar.”** This was increasingly extended by the Christian theologians to rationalize and legitimize the right of divine rule and then, even national and secular rule, on the basis of Pauline doctrine as enshrined in his decree: **“Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.”** [(NIV) Romans 13:1]

The statements and facts above will be compared with some of the guidance from Allah’s Book, the Qur’an, and the Way of the Prophet, the Sunnah, to provide more proofs that indeed Islam is the religion of peace, despite the fact that some disobedient Muslims have distorted, by word and deed, the image of Islam, and despite the venomous propaganda, slander and ridiculous misinformation fabricated and distributed by the enemies of Islam in their crusades against Islam and the Muslims.

We do not deny that aberrations and injustices took place occasionally by some of the Muslims, but the general sweep of historical trends is our evidence, as noted above. And along these lines it may be pertinent to mention a couple more examples, since they show a general pattern. The Christian conquerors of Jerusalem slaughtered all of its Jewish and Muslim inhabitants, whereas the re-conquest of Jerusalem by Salahudeen al-Ayubi stands as a noteworthy example of magnanimity and generosity. We also have the contrast of Andalus (Muslim Spain) and Anatolia (Asia minor). The Christians expelled the Muslims and Jews from Spain or put them to the sword or forced them to convert to Christianity during the infamous “Inquisition,” the paradigm of the treatment of Muslims under Christian rule. In the same era when the Muslims mostly of Turkish stock conquered what is now Turkey, they were comparatively much more tolerant, and to this day the seat of the Eastern Orthodox Church remains in Istanbul (the conquered Constantine). The noted orientalist Sir Thomas Arnold rejects this malicious propaganda about Islam saying: “...of any organized attempt to force the acceptance of Islam on the non-Muslim population, or of any systematic persecution intended to stamp out the Christian religion, we hear nothing. Had the caliphs chosen to adopt either course of action, they might have swept away Christianity as easily as Ferdinand and Isabella drove Islam out of Spain, or Louis XIV made Protestantism penal in France, or the Jews were kept out of England for 350 years. The Eastern Churches in Asia were entirely cut off from communion with the rest of Christendom throughout which no one would have been found to lift a finger on their behalf, as heretical communions. So the very survival of these Churches to the present day is a strong proof of the generally tolerant attitude of Muhammadan [sic] governments towards them” [Sir Thomas W. Arnold: *The Preaching of Islam, a history of the propagation of the Muslim faith*, Westminster A. Constable & Co., London, 1896, p. 80]

The unfortunate reality of history is that European rather than Islamic historical trends have come to dominate the world, and that the reactions against the incessant religious wars among the Christian sects of Europe created the seedbed for the rise of modern European secularism, humanism, nationalism, atheism, and godlessness, and we see that these trends are the roots of the major political and socioeconomic plagues ravishing mankind to this day.

The Misconception that Worldly Gains were the Aim of the Islamic Conquests

A third and related accusation is that the swift Islamic conquests, which startled the known world and by which the Muslim faith was able to spread East and West, were primarily only for war booty, worldly pleasures, fame and glory.

Let us present some facts about the biography of the Prophet (ﷺ) and about Islamic principles from the historical record. The Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) at the beginning of his mission as the Prophet and Messenger of Allah was approached by his people in every possible way and by every possible means to back off and abandon his Call to Islam besides their other attempts by open persecution and oppression to thwart his mission mentioned earlier. The Prophet (ﷺ) was asked by the Quraish leaders: "If you need possession and dominion over all the Arabian Peninsula, we ensure this for you. If you need marriage, we offer you, freely, to marry the most beautiful virgin girl in the Arabian Peninsula". The Prophet (ﷺ) was offered excesses of wealth that no one ever dreamed of possessing in the Arabian Peninsula, but he denied this offer as well. The Arab leaders Quraish made all their offers with the condition that he ceased calling to his religion of Islam and ceased castigating and exposing as foolish their Pagan beliefs in idols and superstitions. The Prophet's (ﷺ) simple, direct and honest reply to all their tempting and lucrative deals was full and final rejection. One famous narration of the words of the Prophet (ﷺ) is recorded as follows:

“By Allah! If they were able to place the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left hand in order to pressure me to abandon the call for this mission, I would not. I will never surrender, nor accept their requests, (but will continue on my mission) until either this Call (of the religion of Islam) becomes predominant and widely accepted and practiced in the Arabian Peninsula, or my head is removed of my body.” [Ibn Hisham, The Biography of Muhammad (ﷺ) vol.1, p.170]

Another fact worthy of noting is that the letters that the Prophet (ﷺ) sent to the prominent kings, governors and rulers of neighboring countries were very clear in allowing them to keep their positions of leadership, dominations, and possessions if they accepted Islam and preserved peace and justice.

For instance, the following famous letter to Heraclius, Emperor of Roman & Byzantine Empire reads as follows.

“In the name of Allah, the Compassionate and Merciful From Muhammad, who is the servant of Allah and His Prophet to Heraclius (the ruler at that time). Peace be on him, who follows the right path. After this, I invite you to the fold of Islam. Therefore, if you desire security, accept Islam. If you accept Islam, Allah shall reward you doubly and if you refuse to do so, the responsibility for the transgression of the entire nation shall be yours. [Allah the Almighty says]:

﴿Say: O People of the Book! Come to common terms as between us and you: that we worship none but Allah; that we associate no partners with Him; that we erect not, from among ourselves, Lords and patrons other than Allah. If then they turn back, say: Bear witness that we are Muslims (who submit to Allah's Will).﴾ (3:64)” (Bukhari & Muslim)

The companion Anas (رضي الله عنه) reported that:

“Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) was never approached to give a reward to a person who accepted Islam, but condoned it. Once, a man came and asked for something if he accepted Islam. The Prophet (ﷺ) offered him (from the Islamic treasury) a herd of sheep that was grazing in a valley between two mountains (at Madinah). As such, the man who received the reward went back to his people and told them, O My people! Accept Islam, as Muhammad (ﷺ) gives such rewards that the recipient will never fear poverty. [All the people related to this man accepted Islam and joined the Muslims]. Anas (رضي الله عنه) continued in his report saying: ‘A man would accept Islam only for materialistic gains, but as soon as he would feel the sweetness of Islam the faith would become dearer to the heart of such person, more than the entire world and its possessions.’” (Bukhari & Muslim)

Let's also examine the amount of wealth that the Prophet (ﷺ) left behind as inheritance after his death. Amr bin al-Harith (رضي الله عنه) reported:

“The Prophet (ﷺ) upon his death left no dirham or dinar (denominations of money), slave, maid or anything else, other than his white mule, his weapon, and a piece of land which he had declared as a charity for Muslims.”

(Muslim)

In fact the Prophet's personal armor was bonded to a Jew as a pawn against a measurement of barley for his family's food at the time of his death. How could any sensible person, then, accuse a man like the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) of being infatuated with materialistic gains and possessions, ephemeral status and glory? Emperors, nationalistic leaders, their generals and warriors seek after glory, land and booty, but the facts above prove that the aim of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was to spread the religion of Islam to mankind by peaceful means for their benefit, and leave them alone in earning their livelihood and fulfilling their material needs as they pleased within the boundaries of Islam.

The companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the followers in truth, show by example of their righteous, upright and ascetic way of life, that they were not after worldly possessions and the fleeting pleasures of this life.

During the Battle of Uhud, the Prophet (ﷺ) commented: **“Get up to gain Paradise which is as spacious as all the heavens and earth put together!”** A man named Omair bin al-Hemam (رضي الله عنه) heard the Prophet's (ﷺ) statement. As such, this man raised the question to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ): **“O Prophet of Allah! Did you say the reward is Paradise, which is as wide as the heavens and earth put together! The Prophet (ﷺ) answered positively. The Companion said: Blessed be it! Blessed be it! The Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, asked the man: “What urged you to say what you said?” The man replied: ‘O Prophet of Allah! The only hope I entertain is to be one of the dwellers of this Paradise!’ The Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: “Surely, you are one of the dwellers of this Paradise.”** Upon hearing such a word from the Prophet (ﷺ), the man got few dates out of his bag to eat before the fight began. But, the man threw the dates in the air and uttered, **By Allah! If I lived to finish eating these dates it would be a very long life! He rushed to fight the enemies of Islam with all his might until he was killed.”** (Muslim)

A man called Shaddad bin al-Hadi (رضي الله عنه) reported that a Bedouin came to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) and expressed interest in Islam. The Bedouin soon embraced Islam. The Bedouin expressed his interest to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) to immigrate with him to Madinah. As such, Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) asked Muslims to take care of the Bedouin, [which they did]. The Muslims fought a battle against the pagans and as a result, they won some war booty. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) distributed the booty among his Companions. The Bedouin was given a share of the booty due to his participation in the fight. The Bedouin asked, 'What is this for?' Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) stated, **'This is a share of the booty for your participation in the fight.'**

The Bedouin uttered, 'I did not give you my pledge of allegiance for worldly gains. In fact, I followed you and embraced Islam hoping that an arrow of the enemy would hit my throat, then I would die, then I would be rewarded with Paradise.' Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) commented on the statement of the Bedouin, **'If you are truthful with Allah, surely Allah would fulfill your desire.'** Later on, a battle was fought, the Bedouin was found dead with an arrow in his throat. He was carried forward and brought before the Prophet (ﷺ). Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) inquired, 'Isn't he the same Bedouin?' The people answered affirmatively. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said,

'Verily this man was truthful with Allah. Therefore, Allah Most Exalted is Truthful with him.'

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) gave his cloak to be used as a shroud for the martyred Bedouin. The funeral was brought forward and they offered a funeral prayer for his soul, using the following supplication for the soul of the martyr:

“O Allah! This is Your slave-servant, who immigrated for Your cause. He was killed as a martyr. I am a witness for that.” (Nisaa'e)

The incident is a testimony for this man and his likes who refused to accept his entitled share of the war booty seeking complete sincerity in his desire for the reward from Allah alone.

Omar bin Al-Khattab (رضي الله عنه) the famous rightly-guided Caliph and Companion of the Prophet (ﷺ) whose conquests reached into vast areas in the known world including the Roman and Persian empires, heard his stomach growl due to lack of proper diet. Upon hearing the growl of his own stomach, Omar (رضي الله عنه) exclaimed, O My dear stomach, growl or be still! By Allah! You will not get properly filled until all Muslims have enough to eat (and enjoy a proper diet)” (Baihaqi in al-Sunan, 9/42]

The booty and spoils of warfare the early Muslims gained by their conquests were sufficient to let them lead a prosperous and gracious life, but the real motive behind the conquests was to call other peoples to the Word of Allah and the religion of Islam, proven by the fact that the conquered peoples were given the freedom of choice to accept Islam as a religion and way of life, and if they did, they would be entitled to all the rights of the other Muslims. This equalitarian and universal approach was unknown in the world at that time built upon racial and national empires where some were privileged nobles and the rest were second-class citizens at best and more probably servants, slaves and feudal serfs. If the conquered people rejected Islam, and remained upon the religion but they did not declare war against the Muslims, they were required to pay the Jizyah (“Head Tax”) a symbolic amount of tax in exchange for the protection of their lives, properties and wealth guaranteed and secured by the Islamic state. Additionally, payers of the head tax would enjoy all public facilities offered and maintained by the Islamic state and were not required to pay any additional taxes whereas Muslims, on the other hand, were required to pay the Zakah (obligatory charity on accumulated wealth, the sum of two and half percent of their annually accumulated funds or a specified amount of agricultural and husbandry produce). Zakah is often much more than what the amount of the head tax is annually. If the non-Muslims in a conquered land refuse to accept either option, and choose to remain belligerent, war would be waged against them in order to deliver the Message of Islam to the people in general. The essential reason for waging a war against other non-Muslims is the fact that, some inhabitants of such non-Islamic countries may, embrace Islam, have they known its principles and mission. For this essential and noble objective, Allah Knows best, Islam imposes on Muslims to wage wars in order to deliver the Message of Allah to the non-Muslims.

One of the greatest generals of Islam, namely, Khalid bin al-Waleed (رضي الله عنه); the most famous and successful general of the early Muslims, expired while he owned only a horse, a sword, and a servant. Where could any one find a trace of materialistic life in the inheritance of such a great Muslim general and warrior?

The books of the Islamic history are replete with numerous narratives of men of this high caliber that confirm that worldly gains were not the objective of the early Muslims, rather, they hoped for the reward from Allah the Most Generous and Bountiful for their sincerity in calling to Islam, the divine religion of guidance from Allah.. As was revealed and promised by the Prophet (ﷺ) like when he said:

“If a single soul, male or female, is guided through you to Islam, it is better for you than the choice red camels (of the world, i.e. the most prized possessions of the Arabs).”

(Muslim & others)

There are many reliable accounts of early Muslims willingly giving up their entire wealth and life savings as charity upon their conversion to Islam. The early members of the Quraish tribe were noteworthy in this regard. Others were deprived of their wealth because their families boycotted them in anger for their embracement of Islam. Others had all their possessions confiscated upon immigration to Medina. Others were extremely involved in the work of Islamic propagation and gave their time and wealth to this activity. To site one example, in the major and decisive battle of Nahawand, a companion of the Prophet (ﷺ) named an-Nu'man bin Muqrin al Mozani (رضي الله عنه) offered the following supplication, “O Allah! Honor and Glorify Your Divine religion, and make those victorious who believe in You. 'O Allah! Let me be the first to be martyred in the battle. O Allah! Grant my eyes the true pleasure to see the best conquest that grants honor and dignity to Islam. O people! Put faith in Allah, He will certainly shower you with His Mercy”. Do you see any materialistic greed and desire for personal glory in this supplication? The main objective is surely to seek the Pleasure of Allah and the sincere wish to call others to accept Islam for their own benefit.

The Ruler of Egypt, the Muqawqis, sent his messenger to the Muslim General, Amr bin al-Aas (رضي الله عنه) who conquered Egypt. The Muslim General was holding the Babylon fortress in siege. The Egyptian Ruler asked his spy to report on what they observed. They all had a consensus on their observation. They said, “We have noticed that they prefer death over life. They prefer to be modest and humble, rather than proud and arrogant. We have noticed that they have no interest among them in worldly gains and possessions. They sit on the floor, and their leader sits like one of them. No one could differentiate between the leader and the led, the master and the slave. They are almost alike, irrespective of their ranks.”

These and many more examples show that accumulation of the spoils of war and self-aggrandizement were not the objectives of early Muslims, rather the zeal of the mission of Islam to guide mankind propelled them from their native homeland to the surrounding areas, carrying with them the universal message of Islam.

Just War Theory and Practice in Islam

Islam, as we explained earlier, is a divine religion of submission to Allah and His revealed guidance for man, which seeks peace and teaches mercy. Although Islam calls for peaceful interactions with all peoples of all countries, engagement in war may become necessary at times as a final remedy. Allah has limited the application of the times to go to war to five situations. It is not called war but “Jihad” according to Islamic terminology, meaning to strive and exert one’s utmost effort in the cause of Allah. The essential difference between war and Jihad is that the objective of Jihad is to defend the Muslims and allow their right to deliver the Islamic invitation to Islam, and to spread the universal message of the Divine Word of Allah, Most Exalted and Almighty. As for war, it may be for defense against aggression, a legitimate reason within certain conditions, but in broad and general historical terms it most often is waged as an aggression and for unjust personal and national vendettas; for imperial, colonial and corporate expansion and hegemony; for the control, exploitation, plunder and theft of material and human resources; or for mere fame, glory and arrogance. Islam does not condone

any of the war objectives and above purposes and considers them all illegitimate and worthy of just retribution. There are only five legitimate reasons for Jihad, as follows:

1. Defense against attack upon life, property, wealth and honor of the Muslim nation and national borders. This is based on the verse revealed in the Glorious Qur'an:

«Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for Allah does not love the transgressors.» (2:190)

This is also based on the tradition of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) who said:

“Whoever is killed while attempting to protect his belongings is a martyr; whoever is killed while attempting to protect himself is a martyr; whoever is killed while attempting to protect his religion is a martyr; and whoever is killed while attempting to protect his family is a martyr.”

(Tirmidhi, Abu Da`ood, Nisaa'I & Ibn Majah)

2. Defense against oppression or those assisting in the oppression of the weak and defenseless. Jihad in this type has a clear obligatory humanitarian objective. Allah, Most Majestic, states in His Glorious Qur'an:

«And why shouldn't you fight in the cause of Allah, and for those who, being weak, are persecuted and oppressed? Men, women, and children, whose cry is: 'Our Lord! Rescue us from this town, whose people are oppressors, and raise for us, from Yourself, a protector, and raise for us, from Yourself, a helper!» (4:75)

This command to resist aggression and persecution is also based on the verse revealed in the Glorious Qur'an:

«Those who believed, immigrated, and fought for the Faith, with their property and their persons, in the cause of Allah, as well as those who gave them asylum and aid, these are all friends and protectors, one of another. As to those who believed, but did not immigrate (in the cause of Allah); you do not owe them the duty of protection until they come into exile; but if they seek your aid in religion, it is your duty to help them, except against a people with whom you have a treaty of mutual alliance. And remember that Allah sees all that you do.» (8:72)

3. In retaliation to the breach and violation of solemnly concluded covenants, pacts and treaties. This is based on the verse revealed in the Glorious Qur'an that states:

«But if they violate their oaths after their covenant, and taunt you for your Faith, fight the chiefs of disbelief: for their oaths are nothing to them: that they will henceforth be restrained. Will you not fight people who violated their oaths, plotted to expel the

Messenger, and took the aggressive by being the first to assault you? Do you fear them? Nay! It is Allah Whom you should more justly fear, if you truly believe!﴾ (9:12-13)

4. Disciplinary actions against those Muslims who aggress and start hostilities without any just cause, and continue obstinately on the path of aggression as Allah the Almighty states:

﴿If two parties among the Believers fall into a quarrel, make peace between them: but if one of the parties transgresses beyond bounds against the other, then fight against the one that transgresses until it complies with the Command of Allah. If it complies, make peace between them with justice, and be just and fair: for Allah loves those who are just and fair.﴾ (49:9)

This type of jihad proves that the purpose of jihad is always for law and justice since it is waged even against Muslim criminals.

5. For the spread of the religion of Islam when peaceful means are impossible. This type is only in the last resort after a series of peaceful contacts proves to the Muslim ruler that peaceful means have become impossible. The first step is an invitation to allow the peaceful preaching of Islam, following the practice (sunnah) of the Prophet (ﷺ) when, as mentioned above, he had sent letters to the surrounding rulers inviting them to Islam. If the ruler refused this invitation, he and his people are offered the option of becoming *dhimmees*, that is, people of the protected non-Muslim community governed by its own religious laws but obliged to abide by the general Islamic laws to maintain law, order and security, and to pay the Jizya tax in lieu of performing military service. Only when the non-Muslims refused these conditions were their grounds for the commencement of open battle for the fact that they oppose the peaceful propagation of Islam. The Muslims are required to wage Jihad against those who not only reject Islam's universal message for mankind that Allah alone is worthy of worship and Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is His Messenger but also stop or curtail the spread of this universal message and its propagation by peaceful means. Islam is the universal faith and religion of Allah, the Creator And Lord – Sustainer of mankind, and therefore is not for any specific people but for all men who should be able to learn about Islam and have the chance to submit to Allah willfully: acceptance of Islam and conversion is not the mission or objective that Muslims seek because guidance is only in the Hands of Allah, Most Wise and Sublime. All people must have a chance to hear about the goodness, justice, brotherhood, love, equality and peace and all that Islam teaches. The Benevolent and Almighty Lord of Man states in His Glorious Qur'an:

﴿And fight them until there is no more temptation, strife or oppression, and there prevails justice and faith in Allah altogether and everywhere. But if they cease, verily, Allah sees all that they do.﴾ (8:39)

If at any time the enemies of Islam and the Muslims cease their hostilities and aggressions and sue for or accept just terms of peace, Muslims are obliged to stop the state of war, start

negotiations, and it becomes unlawful for them to pursue any course of warfare against them. Allah, the Wise and Omniscient said:

﴿Except those who join a group between whom and you there is a treaty (of peace), or those who approach you with hearts restraining them from fighting you as well as fighting their own people. If Allah had willed, He could have given them power over you, and they would have fought you: therefore if they withdraw from you and do not fight you but instead send you guarantees of peace, then Allah has opened no way for you (to continue the war against them).﴾ (4:90)

The causes of legitimate warfare are thus identified above, and other verses in this context are as follows:

Allah, the Great, said:

﴿They ask you concerning fighting in the Sacred Months. Say: ‘Fighting therein is a great (transgression) but a greater (transgression) in the sight of Allah is to prevent mankind from following the Way of Allah, to disbelieve in Him, to prevent access to the Holy Mosque (in Makkah), and to drive out its inhabitants and fitnah (temptation, worship of idols, and civil strife) is worse than killing.﴾ (2:217)

Allah, the Great, says:

﴿And fight them until there is no more fitnah (disbelief and worshipping others besides Allah) and (all and every kind of) worship is for Allah. But if they cease, let there be no transgression except against the tyrants.﴾

(2:193)

Allah, the Exalted, says:

﴿Those who believe fight in the Way of Allah, and those who disbelieve fight in the Way of Taghoot (Satan, idols, tyrants). So fight you against the followers of Satan: Indeed the plot of Satan is feeble.﴾ (4:76)

All other types of wars, as mentioned above, resulting in destruction and great loss of life and property, are banned and declared unlawful and aggression in Islam. Wars waged to arrogantly demonstrate force and supposed superiority, as with those rationalized as pre-emptive strikes, are also prohibited in Islam. As Allah, the Exalted, says:

﴿And be not like those who started from their homes in arrogance and insolence and to be seen of men, and to hinder men from the path of Allah: for indeed Allah encompasses around all that they do.﴾ (8:47)

Although Islam permits fighting for the necessary reasons mentioned above, it lays down strict rules and regulations for the conduct of warfare on both the leaders and the soldiers, the “mujahideen,” and directs all to observe the noble Islamic manners and ethics even in this most difficult of times. The Muslim fighters are permitted to target and kill only those who fight against them or assist and support other fighters in the battlefield. As for the elderly people, minors, women, sick, wounded, or those who isolate and seclude themselves in worship by belief in non-violence, all these categories of people who are non-combatants are not to be targeted, killed, molested or even bothered in any manner by Muslim fighters. It is prohibited to kill an enemy soldier fighting against Muslims wounded and fallen on a battlefield as well. Islam bans mutilation of the bodies and cadavers of all killed enemies. Furthermore, Islam bans the killing of the enemies' animals, and the destruction of their agriculture and dwellings and infrastructure, except in certain circumstances necessary for the immediate battle. Additionally, Islam prohibits intentional pollution of the water sources of the enemies and their wells. Islam considers all the aforementioned items as acts leading to the disruption of the society and unnecessary hardship on the common people.

Jihad in Islam is a means to allow the peaceful spread of the Word of Allah and the message of Islam. As Allah states in His Glorious Qur'an, the intention of this life for a Muslim is to seek the life of the Hereafter through good deeds:

﴿But seek with that which Allah has bestowed upon you, the Home of the Hereafter, and do not forget your due portion in this World. Do good as Allah has been good to you, and do not seek occasions for mischief in the land. Indeed Allah does not love those who do mischief.﴾

(28:77)

From among the many teachings and guidance from Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, to the mujahideen, are the following:

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) stated that there is only one legitimate intention for jihad, when he said:

“He who strives and fights in order to make the Word of Allah the Most Supreme is the one who strives and fights for the cause of Allah.” (Bukhari & Muslim)

When a woman was found killed in one of these battles, the Messenger of Allah mentioned that this one was not fighting and forbade the killing of women and children. (Muslim)

He also gave the following instructions:

“Begin your fight with the Name of Allah against those who declare the state of disbelief in Allah. Fight against them, but do not breach your contracts or covenants. Do not mutilate the bodies of the fighters killed. Do not kill a newly born baby.” (Muslim)

And he said:

“Go forward in the name of God. Do not kill an elderly person, nor a child, nor a woman, and do not exceed the bounds.” (Malik & Abu Dawood)

The eminent companion, Abu Bakr as-Siddeeq (رضي الله عنه) the first Muslim Caliph of the Islamic State, gave the following advice to the Muslim army he deputed saying: **“Wait before you leave. I would like to give you the following advices: Do not betray or act treacherously; Do not steal from the war booty before its proper and lawful distribution; Do not breach your pledges and covenants with your enemies; Do not mutilate the bodies of the killed fighters; Do not kill a little, minor child, a woman, or an elderly man; Do not cut or burn a palm tree [or any other tree for any reason]; Do not cut a fruit-bearing tree; Do not slaughter a sheep, a cow or a camel, except for your food; You may come across people who seclude themselves for the worship of God, leave them alone. Do not bother them or cause any disruption to their lives.** [Reported by at-Tabari, Vol.3, p.226, and others]

Similarly, Muslims must declare war prior to the beginning of the fight. This is because Muslims are neither betrayers, nor dishonest fighters. Islam imposes some of the best of war ethics and morals onto the Muslim fighters. Islam requires full adherence to justice and no oppression to the fighting enemies.

Omar bin Abdul-Aziz, may Allah have mercy on him, one of the early Umayyad Muslim Caliphs, was approached by a delegation of fighters of the city of Samarqand who complained about the Muslim leader, Qutaibah, who had taken them by a surprise attack. The Caliph sent a letter to the governor of the concerned area commanding him to assign a judge to investigate this matter, and if the judge deemed that Muslims should get out of the city and leave it for any breach of trust, they must comply with the judgment. The governor of Samarqand assigned a judge named Jomai' bin Hader al-Baji who passed his verdict that Muslims should leave the city which they had conquered. The Muslim army commander must first declare war openly and with a proper proclamation, prior to invading the land and launching their attack upon the people of Samarqand, give them a chance to prepare themselves for the fight and to know the reasons for the attack. The people of Samarqand seeing the just dealing of the Muslims, decided against restarting hostilities and accepted the terms of Islamic rule. [see "Futuh-al-Buldan" Countries of the Conquests, by Balathuri, p.428]

As with reference to captives and prisoners, always a sensitive and divisive subject between warring parties, Islam strictly forbids intimidation, torture, mutilation, or starving them to death. Indeed, feeding them is a virtue the reward of which is with Allah as he says:

﴿And they feed, for the love of Allah, the indigent, the orphan, and the captive, (Saying): We feed you for the sake of Allah alone, and we do not desire from you reward nor thanks.﴾ (76:8-9)

The Islamic leader reserves the full freedom to release the prisoners of war free without ransom, set terms for their ransom, or release them in exchange for the release of Muslim prisoners of war. This is based on the verse revealed in the Glorious Qur'an:

﴿Therefore, when you meet the disbelievers (in warfare), smite at their necks. At length, when you have thoroughly subdued them, bind a firm bond (on them if captured alive). Thereafter (you may dispose of them) either by your generosity or through ransom -- until the war lays down its burdens (by peace treaty). Thus (you are commanded), but if it had been Allah's Will, He could certainly have exacted retribution from them (Himself); but (He lets you fight) in order to test you, some by means of the others. Those who are slain in the way of Allah, He will never let their deeds be lost.﴾ (47:4)

As for the defeated non-Muslim residents of the conquered countries, the people of the Book like the Christians and Jews, were treated with respect, and their integrity, dignity and honor was maintained, their wealth and properties secured from aggression and unjust confiscation. They and their women were never molested or unduly humiliated in any manner, way or means. The homes and dwellings for their families were left unharmed. In summery they were dealt with fairly and justly. Their originally divine faith was honored and dignified, and if they chose to remain upon it they were responsible to respect and obey the Islamic tenants and religion, and maintain obedience to the public good, security and rule of equitable law. This is based on many verses and teachings, including what Allah said as follows:

﴿(They are) those who, if We establish them in the land, establish regular prayer and give regular charity, enjoin the right and forbid wrong: with Allah rests the end (and decision) of (all) affairs.﴾ (22:41)

One of the best evidences reflecting these teachings is the example set by Omar bin al-Khattab (رضي الله عنه) the second Muslim Caliph of the Islamic State, and the conqueror of the Roman and Persian empires, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem Aelia upon entering it as victorious. Tabari reported that he wrote to them as follows:

"In the Name of Allah, the Most Compassionate and Most Gracious. This is the covenant of security granted by the servant of Allah, 'Omar the Commander of the Faithful, to the people of Aelia. He, hereby, guarantees the security of their persons and property, their churches and crosses, the little and the great and all adherents of the Christian religion. It is prohibited that their churches be inhibited or demolished or diminished as regards with the church itself or its domain. Nor may their crosses be impaired or any of their properties in any manner. They should not be coerced to abandon their faith and none of them may be harmed. No Jews are permitted to live with them in Aelia. Upon the people of Aelia falls the obligation to pay the jizya, as is the case with the people of Mada'in, as well as evict from their midst the Byzantine. Whoever of these who leaves Aelia will be granted security of person and property until he reaches his destination. Whoever decides to stay in Aelia will also be granted the same, and share with the people of Aelia in their rights and pay jizya. The same applies to the people of Aelia as well as to any other person. Those who would like to march with the Byzantines may go and those who would like to return to their people will not be bound to pay anything until they reap their harvest. Allah attests to the content of

this treaty, and so do His Prophet, his successors and the believers. This is witnessed by Khalid Ibn Al-Walid, 'Amr Ibn Al-'Aas, Abdur-Rahman Ibn Al-'Awf and Mu'awiyah Ibn Abi Sufyan. Executed in the year 15 Hijri."

Surely, there is nothing comparable in recorded history of mankind. We believe that this is the best form of nobility, justice and tolerance from the conqueror's side towards the vanquished. Most conquerors strip the defeated people from all rights, freedoms and honor, including the right to a decent life, subjugating them to labor as slaves or second-class citizens and serve the conquerors' interests. Omar bin al-Khattab (رضي الله عنه) could have easily dictated harsh terms and conditions against the defeated Christians and Jews at the time, but followed the lead of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) in his generosity and magnanimity when he conquered Makkah after years of dealing with their treacherous warfare of the Medinan period and the bitter persecution of the Makkan period of his mission. This justice aimed at the noble goal of propagating the word of Allah and not gaining personal or national advantage. These examples, among others, illustrate the justice, tolerance, and beauty of Islam, the divinely revealed religion of Allah for universal and just peace. The laws of Allah, the Almighty, must apply to all people without any exception or favoritism.

Non-Muslims living under the Islamic rule are obligated to pay the Jizyah (so called head tax) which is a minimal, symbolic amount imposed on the non-Muslim residents who willingly choose to maintain their previous faith and life under the government of the Islamic State. The basis of this is found in the verse of Allah:

﴿Fight against those who do not believe in Allah, nor in the Last Day, nor forbid that which has been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger, nor acknowledge the religion of truth, from among the people of the Scripture, until they pay the jizya with willing submission and feel themselves subdued.﴾ (9:29)

This tax is of three types as calculated by the currency of the time:

- The head tax of the rich and the affluent people. This is estimated as forty-eight dirhams of silver taken from each individual annually.
- The head tax of the middle-class individuals such as merchants, businessmen, and farmers. This is estimated as twenty-four dirhams of silver taken from each individual annually.
- The head tax taken from the laborers and craftsmen who are in business. This is estimated as twelve dirhams of silver taken from each individual annually.

The Jizya tax is imposed on the non-Muslims living in the Islamic State as a sign of submission to the Islamic State, as a symbolic payment for the guarantee that their honor, integrity, wealth and life will be protected by the Islamic government against external enemies and internal violations, and because they are exempted from serving in the military. This protection includes all rights and obligations as specified and agreed upon contractually.

In comparison Muslims have additional duties, including the obligation to serve in the military when required, and to pay the Zakah (obligatory alms) and other forms of sadaqah (charity).

Khalid bin al-Waleed (رضي الله عنه) one of the most renowned Muslim war generals, in one of his contractual pledges to the non-Muslims living in the Islamic State said: **“I have given you my pledge of trust to accept your head tax and in return, to protect you against all possible odds (that we protect ourselves against). If we succeed in offering you the protection we would take the head tax. If not, then you would not have to pay it until we can provide you such protection.”** (Balathuri's history)

L. Veccia Vaglieri, in her book entitled “Defending Islam” says: **“Conquered people by Islamic governments were given full freedom to maintain and preserve their faith and traditions provided that individuals who elected this option and did not accept Islam as a way of life, would pay a fair head tax to the Islamic government. Head tax was less than what Muslims paid to their government. Non Muslims, residing under Islamic ruled state, paid such tax in exchange for the general blanket protection offered by the Islamic government extended for its own people.”**

One must remember that the three types of the jizya tax calculated above were for the earning members whereas other classes of the non-Muslims -- namely the poor, needy, minors, women, the monks, priests, or rabbis, the permanently disabled, and the blind -- were exempted entirely from the payment of this head tax, and their protection, needs and general welfare was undertaken free of cost by the Islamic Treasury.

For example, Omar bin al-Khattab (رضي الله عنه) was sitting once when an old Jew passed by asking people to give him charity. Omar asked about the welfare of the individual and was informed that the man was living as a non-Muslim under the rule of the Islamic state and protection, paying head tax. Omar (رضي الله عنه) declared: **“We have not been fair to you! We have imposed head tax on you and charged you such tax when you were young and able, and now we are not providing you with the proper social care and welfare (when you are old and disabled).”**

As a result, Omar took the man to his own home, fed him and offered him proper clothing. And thereafter he commanded the Muslim Treasurer: 'Look into the case of this man, and those of similar situation, and give them a sufficient income from the Islamic Treasury, along with their families. Allah, the Almighty, stated in His Qur'an

﴿Alms are for the poor and destitute; the needy; those employed to administer the (funds); those whose hearts have been (recently) reconciled (to the truth); those in bondage; and in debt; in the cause of Allah; and for the wayfarer: (thus it is) ordained by Allah, and Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom.﴾ (9:60)

The poor are the Muslims. The needy are the People of the Book.” [Abu Yousef, al-Kharaj, p.126]

In Khalid bin al-Waleed's pledge, may Allah be pleased with him, to the non-Muslims of al-Heerah, in Iraq, the following was written: **“Any non-Muslim living under the protection of the Islamic state who grows old and becomes unable to work, or becomes a terminal**

patient, or becomes broke and bankrupt in such a manner that he would be entitled for charity by his own people's faith, will no longer be required to pay the head tax. Such individuals will be provided for their essential needs from the Islamic Treasury, along with their families” [Abu Yousef, Al-Kharaj, p.144]

Lis Lichtenstadter, a German scholar, in her book titled, “Islam and the Modern Age, states: “The option given to the people of Persia and Rome or the West, during the time of the spread of Islam, was not to be killed by the sword or accept Islam. In fact, the option was either to accept Islam as a way of life, or else to pay the head tax (in exchange for protection). This is a praiseworthy plan which was applied later on in England during the rein of Queen Elizabeth.” [Islam and Modern Age, p. 67. See also, Ahmad Shalabi, Comparative Religious Studies, vol. 3, p.174]

Non-Muslims living under the rule of the Islamic state are fully entitled for full protection and respect for their rights. Allah the Almighty states in the Glorious Qur’an:

﴿It may be that God will grant love and friendship between you and those whom you hold as enemies. For God has power over all things; And God is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful. God forbids you not, with regard to those who do not fight you for your Faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them: for God loves those who are just. God only forbids you, with regard to those who fight you for your Faith, and drive you out of your homes, and support others in driving you out, from turning to them for friendship and protection. Those who turn to them (in these circumstances) do wrong.﴾ (60:7-9)

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

"The one who wrongs a covenanter or impairs his right or overworks him or forcibly takes something from him, I will be his prosecutor on the Day of Judgment."

(Abu Dawood & Nasa’ee)

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

"The one who kills a covenanter will never smell the scent of heaven and its scent is found at the distance of forty years.” (Bukhari)

In summery we quote from Will Durant about this much maligned jizya, who quotes from the orientalist Welldiorant: “The people of dhimma: Christians, Zaradishts, Jews and Sabi'a; enjoyed a degree of tolerance during the Umayyad rule which can never be assimilated to Christian countries nowadays. They were free to practice their rituals. They maintained their churches and synagogues and the only obligation was that they should wear a special color and pay tax for every person pro rata on his income. This sum ranged between two and four dinars. This tax was exclusively levied on non-Muslims who can go to war. However priests, women, children, slaves, elderly men, the disabled, the blind and the destitute were exempted

from the tax. Dhimmis were exempted from military service in return. They were also exempted from zakat which is 2.5% of the annual income and the government was bound to protect them.” [History of Civilization, vol.12, p131]

Islamic Principles Enjoin Mercy and Condemn Aggression

The Divine religion of Islam is a religion of peace, mercy, tolerance, kindness and benevolence. It stands upright against all brutality, wanton violence, and viciousness in order to promote and protect justice and peace. Allah, the Most Benevolent urged all Muslims to follow the pattern of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) as follows:

﴿It is part of the Mercy of Allah that you deal gently with them. Were you severe or harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about you. So pass over their faults, and ask for Allah's forgiveness for them; and consult them in the affairs. Then, when you have taken a decision, put your trust in Allah. For Allah loves those who put their trust in Him.﴾ (3:159)

Allah the Wise and Sublime characterizes the mission of Muhammad (ﷺ) as a mercy to all, when He said Most Exalted:

﴿We have not sent you but as a Mercy for all creation.﴾

(21:108)

The teachings of Islam call all Muslims to show mercy and kindness to every innocent and poor person. The Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“The merciful and kind people will receive the Mercy of the Merciful Lord, Allah, the Almighty. Be merciful to people on earth, and Allah, the Almighty, Who is in Heaven, will grant you His Mercy.” (Tirmidhi)

and in another version he said:

“Allah, the Almighty, would be Merciful to the merciful people. Be merciful to those on earth, and the One in Heaven would be Merciful to you.”

(Tirmidhi & Abu Dawood)

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

“Being kind to others is good in every matter, and if kindness is removed (from the hearts of people) the situation becomes bad and worst” (Muslim)

The Messenger of Allah, may the peace and blessing of Allah be upon him said: **"He who is deprived of forbearance and gentleness is, in fact, deprived of all good."** [Reported by Muslim].

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"Whenever forbearance is added to something, it adorns it; and whenever it is withdrawn from something, it leaves it defective." (Muslim)

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to Ashaj Abdul-Qais, may Allah be pleased with him:

"You possess two qualities that Allah loves: clemency and tolerance." (Muslim)

Furthermore, Islam requires that mercy and kind treatment should be meted out to all people, even to the enemies of the Muslims captured during the jihad, as in the command of the Prophet of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) when he said: **“Be kind and merciful to the captives”** [see Al-Mu'jammal-Kabeer, The Grand Dictionary of Hadith. 22/393].

If the Prophet (ﷺ) commanded this command to Muslims concerning the hostile enemies who are fighting against them, then the treatment towards the peaceful people would naturally be even better.

Never is any life to be taken unjustly. As Allah said:

﴿**Nor take life, -which Allah has made sacred-, except for just cause. And, if anyone is slain wrongfully, We have given his heir authority (to demand Qisas or to forgive): but let him not exceed bounds in the matter of taking life; for he is helped (by the law).**﴾
(17:33)

More on this topic will be presented below, but here let us note that Islamic mercy and kindness, not to mention the prohibition of taking life unjustly, is not limited to human beings but includes animals and all living creatures as well.

The Prophet of Allah, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, noticed someone shooting a little bird for fun and then leaving it to die for no reason, whereupon he said:

“This little bird would supplicate its case before Allah the Almighty on the Day of Judgment, saying ‘O My Lord! This man killed me for no reason to benefit by my death (like hunting for food which is allowed).’”

(Ahmed & Nasa'ee)

The companion Abdullah ibn Omar (رضي الله عنه) is reported to have passed by a group of young men from the tribe of Quraish who had captured a bird and set it up as a shooting target. He said: 'Who placed this bird as a shooting target? May Allah's Curse descend on the person who did this! The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“Allah the Almighty curses the person who captures and sets any living creature as a shooting target” (Bukhari & Muslim)

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) commanded Muslims to show kindness in every action, even when slaughtering an animal, by the words:

“Allah, the Almighty, prescribes perfection in every action. If you kill, be perfect in your killing. If you slaughter an animal for meat, perfect your act of slaughtering. Sharpen your knife and be good, kind, and merciful to the animal you are about to slaughter. Give the slaughtered animal the best comfort you can while being slaughtered.”
(Muslim)

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“While a man was on a trip in the wilderness he became extremely thirsty. He searched for water and found a well and managed to go to the bottom of the well to get to the water. Since he had nothing to reach the bottom from the top where the water was he suffered a great deal to reach down but eventually managed to quench his thirst and came out of the well. Upon reaching the surface he found a dog with his tongue stretched out from severe thirst. The man thought to himself: ‘This dog is certainly suffering the same hardship I suffered from his severe thirst.’ Therefore the man went down the well again, holding one of his shoes by his teeth, filled the shoe with water and brought it back up to the thirsty dog. The dog drank and went away. Allah, the Almighty, appreciated the action of this man and forgave his previous sins.”

One of the audience, who heard the statement of the Prophet (ﷺ) enquired, O Messenger of Allah! Would we be rewarded for being kind and merciful to animals? Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) asserted:

“Truly there is a blessed reward for being kind and merciful to every living creature that has a moist liver.”

(Bukhari)

Conversely a woman deserved the penalty and the wrath of Allah, the Almighty, and was to become one of the dwellers of the Fire of Hell, as a result of her cruelty to a cat. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) is reported to have said:

“A certain woman would become a dweller of the Fire of Hell as a result of cruel treatment of a cat. She tied the cat up and did not offer it food nor let it eat food from its surroundings” (Bukhari & Muslim)

The list of the Prophet's (ﷺ) commands to Muslims to be kind, merciful, and kindhearted even to animals is endless. We only cited above few examples. Some other examples are as under:

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said while passing by a donkey that had been tattooed on its face:

“May Allah's Curse descend on the person who placed this tattoo on the face of the donkey.” (Muslim)

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) is reported to have said while passing by a camel that appeared extremely thin from hunger:

“Be mindful and honor the Commandments of Allah concerning these animals, which can't express their needs by speech. Ride them while you keep them in good shape, and slaughter and eat them while you keep them in good shape.” (Abu Da`ood)

If such was the mercy and kindness to animals and living creatures, what about the human being, who is given preference, honor and respect over all other creatures of Allah's creation? The Omniscient and Almighty Allah honored man above all others, and enumerated His bounties to mankind:

﴿We have honored the sons of Adam and provided them with transport on land and sea, given them for sustenance things good and pure, and conferred on them special favors, making them to be above a greater part of Our Creation.﴾ (17:70)

Indeed by obedience to Allah and the guidance revealed to His Messengers, man is honored, but by disobedience he falls into disgrace and dishonors himself by shameful and obnoxious deeds.

Islamic General Principles Champion Comprehensive Peace

For peace to be true and comprehensive it must encompass all spheres of human activity fulfilling the needs of life in a balanced and just manner. Islamic laws and teachings include

the following principles, legal precepts and guidance -- presented as examples only -- all of which aim at promoting such a universal and just peace.

-> Respect for the human life

Islam values all human life, and for its protection imposes the death penalty [*Qisaas*] for premeditated and intentional murder of an innocent soul. Accidental and unintentional killing has a different penalty, which is called “*Diyyah*” (blood-money), defined as a pre-determined sum of money, given to the heirs of the person killed, as a compensation money. This blood-money is by no means an equal for the loss of the person killed, but it is rather a financial compensation for the harm they suffer as a result of the loss of their loved one. Atonement (*kaffarah*) is to be performed by the killer by emancipation of a slave, or observing a continuous fast for two consecutive months to expiate the sin of his mistake. If the murderer cannot observe this fast for a legitimate reason, he is obliged to feed sixty poor people a reasonably sufficient meal. This atonement is an act of worship by which the sinner seeks pardon and forgiveness from Allah Most Merciful for his unintentional sin of killing a human soul. All this is done to demonstrate the sacredness of the human life. Islam prescribes the severe penalty for killing a human soul intentionally since if a potential killer realizes that he or she will be killed in retaliation and penalty for the crime, perhaps they will think twice before committing murder. If the penalty were anything less than strict retribution, the criminals would continue boldly in their crimes. The same applies to all capital and corporal punishments, called *Hudood* (boundaries) in Islam. Capital punishments in Islam are efficient and effective just penalties and successful deterrents for a very essential and noble reason to preserve and maintain security of the human life, as Allah, the Most wise and Almighty states in His Glorious Qur’an:

﴿**In *Qisaas* (Law of Equality in Retribution) there is Life for you, O men of understanding, that you may restrain yourselves (from transgression).**﴾ (2:179)

And Allah Most Beneficent said:

﴿**On that account: We ordained for the Children of Israel that if any one slew a person - unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land - it would be as if he slew the whole people: and if any one saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people. Then although there came to them Our prophets with clear signs, yet, even after that, many of them continued to commit excesses in the land.**﴾ (5:32)

Furthermore, the hardened unrepentant criminal is threatened with the everlasting penalty in the Hellfire, a permanent abode of humiliation and endless torture, under the Wrath of Allah, the Almighty, in the Hereafter. Allah, the Wise and Almighty states:

﴿If a man kills a Believer intentionally, his recompense is Hell, to abide therein (forever), and the wrath and the curse of Allah are upon him, and a dreadful penalty is prepared for him.﴾ (4:93)

Abu Bakrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated: “I heard Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) saying:

“When two Muslims fight (meet) each other with their swords, both the murderer as well as the murdered will go to Hell-fire.” I said: “O Allah’s Messenger! It is all right for the murderer, but what about the murdered one? Allah’s Messenger replied: “He surely had the intention to kill his companion.”” (Bukhari)

Of course if one sincerely repents then Allah’s Mercy and Forgiveness encompasses all sinners.

-> Equality of human status

All humans are innately equal and this applies to both male and female alike. When Allah, the Almighty, created the first human, Adam, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, -- our great grandfather and the father for entire humanity -- he also created our grandmother Eve. Thus humanity is essentially one family and of one race from this honorable couple. Humans became distinguished thereafter by their belief and obedience or their disbelief and disobedience. Allah, the Almighty, states in the Glorious Qur’an:

﴿O Mankind! Reverence your Guardian-Lord, who created you from a single Person and created its mate, and from the two of them scattered countless men and women; fear Allah, through Whom you demand your mutual rights, and reverence the wombs (that bore you), for Allah is ever watchful over you.﴾ (4:1)

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“All people are the children of Adam and Adam is created from the dust.” (Ahmed)

Since dust is of different colors and traits, man also developed into different colors and traits.

The Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) said:

“Allah has relieved you from the burden of ignorance with its pride in the fathers and the ancestors. You are all from Adam, and Adam is from dust. There is no difference between an Arab and a non-Arab, nor between a black man and a red man except in piety.”

(Abu Dawood)

All humans initially believed in the common faith of Islamic monotheism as revealed to Adam, and spoke the same common language. As Allah the Almighty states in His Magnificent Qur'an:

﴿Mankind was but one Ummah (nation and community) but differed (later). Had it not been for a (definite) Word that went forth before from your Lord, their differences would have been settled between them.﴾ (10:19)

Consequently man began to differ and the reasons for their differences include: multiplication of their numbers; emigrations to various areas of the earth; divergence of colors and other features of the human subgroups developing through time by environmental stimulus etc; development of local languages and dialects and many other factors.

Since Islam regards each human being, regardless of race, color, language, creed, faith, religion, or home country on an equal footing with other human beings in the trait of humanity, all human beings are equal before the Laws of Allah, the Almighty:

﴿O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full Knowledge and is well-acquainted (with all things).﴾ (49:13)

And in the traditions we read that Aishah, Allah be pleased with her, reported: The Quraish were much worried about the case of a Makhzumiyah woman who had committed theft and wondered who should intercede for her with Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). Some said Usamah bin Zaid (رضي الله عنه) was his beloved and thus he may dare do so. So Usamah (رضي الله عنه) spoke to him about that matter, and the Prophet (ﷺ) said to him,

“Are you interceding when one of the penal codes ordained by Allah has been violated?” Then he got up and addressed the people saying: “The people before you were ruined because when a noble person amongst them committed theft, they would leave him, but if a weak person amongst them committed theft, they would execute the legal punishment on him. By Allah, were Fatimah, the daughter of Muhammad, to commit the theft, I would have cut off her hand.” (Bukhari & Muslim)

All human beings are also equal in terms of basic freedom and responsibilities. Omar bin al-Khattab (رضي الله عنه) made an eloquent statement on this fact some fourteen centuries ago when he declared to a sinning Muslim who arrogantly had wronged a non-Muslim: “Have you enslaved some people though their own mothers gave birth to them free?” Therefore, every human being, in the sight of Islam, is entitled to the following types of freedom, mentioned in brief examples as follows:

- **Freedom of thought and opinion.** Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, commanded the Muslims, to declare the truth, express honest opinion, and refrain from intimidating others as he is reported to have said:

“A person who knows the truth and does not declare it, is a mute devil” (Tirmidhi)

- **Freedom of access to benefit from the wealth, minerals, and natural resources of the earth.** The Almighty Allah states:

﴿It is He Who has made the earth manageable for you, so traverse through its tracts and enjoy of the Sustenance which He furnishes. (You will return) unto Him for the Resurrection.﴾ (67:15)

- **Freedom of access to lawful income and ownership.** Islam encourages all to work in beneficial trades and have a free access to lawful income. For instance in inheritance Allah, the Almighty, states:

﴿From what is left by parents and those nearest related, there is a share for men and a share for women, whether the property be small or large, a determinate share.﴾ (4:7)

- **Freedom of learning and teaching.** Islam advocates the freedom of learning for every member in the society. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“Seeking knowledge is an obligatory duty upon every Muslim” (Baihaqi)

In fact, Islam classifies the act of monopolizing essential, useful and Islamic knowledge, concealing it from others, and not sharing it with them, an unforgivable act that renders the doer to be the recipient of the Wrath of Allah, the Almighty, and His Penalty. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) is reported to have said:

“A knowledgeable person who is asked to share his knowledge with others but refuses to do so and hides his information would have a harness of fire put on him on the Day of Judgment” (Abu Dawood & Tirmidhi)

- **Freedom of access to entitlement for leadership position in the society, if he possesses the necessary qualifications.** Ability and efficiency are the main criteria required for holding leadership position in the Islamic society, as opposed to color and race, for instance. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) is reported to have said:

“If a person is assigned the charge of the Muslim affairs, then appoints a person on favoritism irrespective of his qualifications, he would deserve the Wrath and Curse of Allah. Allah, the Almighty, would not accept any of his actions and such a person would be in the Hellfire”

(Hakim)

Many more freedoms are guaranteed in the Islamic system, only some are mentioned above by way of examples.

Freedom is often a misused word, since real freedom cannot be achieved if man is a slave to his base desires - or a servant of the desires of others - and seeks to fulfill them by any immoral and unlawful means. The man is allured to this false freedom by the enticement of the Satan, the avowed enemy of all mankind, who in his jealous rage, hates the human race and has given his committed oath to Allah to wait with his troops in ambush to strike with their arsenal of weapons whenever and wherever possible. Allah, the Almighty said:

﴿O Children of Adam! Let not Satan seduce you in the same manner as he made your parents to be expelled from the Paradise, stripping them of their garments to expose their shame. Indeed he and his tribe watch you from a position where you cannot see them (to entrap you). Indeed, We have made the Evil Ones friends only to those who disbelieve.﴾ (7:27)

-> The unity and inviolability of the religion of Allah for all humans

As the universal and eternal religion of Allah for all men, Islam aims at eliminating all aspects of tribalism, nationalism, racism and party spirit leading to conflict. Islam is the religion of Allah that was taught to all men in its essentials of monotheism even though particulars of the law and guidance may vary according to man's circumstances. The same basic message was given from Prophet Adam until the final Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ).

Allah, the Almighty, states in the Glorious Qur'an:

﴿(Allah) has established for you the same religion that He has enjoined on Noah - (similar to) that which We have sent by inspiration to you - and that which We enjoined on Abraham, Moses, and Jesus: namely, that you should remain steadfast in Religion, and make no divisions therein. The (way) to which you call them is severe on those who worship other than Allah. Indeed Allah chooses to Himself those whom He pleases, and guides to Himself those who turn (to Him).﴾ (42:13)

Allah, the Almighty, also states:

﴿We have sent revelation to you as We sent it to Noah and the Messengers after him: We sent revelation to Abraham, Isma'il, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, to Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, and Solomon, and to David We gave the Psalms. Of some Messengers We have already told you the story and of others We have not, and to Moses Allah spoke directly. The Messengers gave good news as well as warning, so that mankind - after the coming of the Messengers - should have no plea against Allah: for Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise.﴾ (4:163-165)

And Allah the Sublime says:

﴿That was the argument and reasoning about Us which We gave to Abraham (to use) against his people: We raise whom We will, degree after degree: for thy Lord is full of wisdom and knowledge. We gave him Isaac and Jacob: all We guided: and before him We guided Noah, and among his progeny, David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, Moses and Aaron: thus do We reward those who do good: And Zachariah and John, and Jesus and Elias: all are in the ranks of the Righteous.﴾ (6:83-6)

The Lord sustainer of Man, Allah, the Omniscient and Almighty, sent them all with the same call:

﴿O my people! Worship Allah! You have no other god but Him.﴾ (11:50, 61, 84...)

Allah, the Almighty also says:

﴿Say: We believe in Allah, and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Ishma'il, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and that given to Moses and Jesus, and that given to all the Prophets from their Lord: we make no difference between one and another of them: and we submit to Allah (in Islam).﴾ (2:136)

As such, each and every Muslim is obligated by faith and creed: to believe in all the Prophets and Messengers; to believe in the Divine Books and Scriptures revealed and sent down to them; to respect and honor every Divine Law revealed by Allah, the Almighty, to any previous people; to believe in the brotherhood of the previous followers of the Book who welcomed the Mission of Muhammad (ﷺ). The Message of Islam which was brought by Muhammad (ﷺ) is the Final Divine Message to mankind, as Allah said:

﴿Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but (he is) the Messenger of Allah, and the Last of the Prophets: and Allah has full knowledge of all things.﴾

(33:40)

Thus the final Divine Message of Islam as revealed to the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, abrogates all previous messages. Abrogation by no means is a denial of the previous messages but that they are no longer in effect: henceforth only Islam is the religion acceptable to Allah, the Supreme Lord, as the Most Wise and Omnipotent said:

«**If anyone desires a religion other than Islam (submission to Allah), never will it be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter he will be in the ranks of those who have lost.**» (3:85)

Islam urges the followers of previous Divine Messages to believe in the Message of Islam, as revealed upon Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, as Allah, the Almighty, said:

«**So if they believe in the same as you believe in, then they have been [rightly] guided; but if they turn away, they are only in dissension, and Allah will be sufficient for you against them. And He is the Hearing, the Knowing.**» (2:137)

And Allah, Most Great and Majestic said:

«**Those who deny Allah and His Messengers, and who wish to separate Allah from His Messengers, saying: ‘We believe in some but reject others’, And who wish to take a course midway: They are in truth disbelievers; and We have prepared for disbelievers a humiliating Punishment.**» (4:150-151)

All forms of disbelief are categorically castigated by Allah:

«**As for those who divide their religion and break up into sects, you should have no part in them in the least: their affair is with Allah: He will in the end tell them the truth of all that they did. He that does good shall have (the reward) ten times as much to his credit: he that does evil shall only be recompensed according to his evil: no wrong shall be done unto (any of) them. Say: "Verily, my Lord hath guided me to a Way that is straight, a religion of right, the Path (trode) by Abraham, the true in faith, and he (certainly) did not associate other gods with Allah. Say: Truly, my prayer and my service of sacrifice, my life and my death, are (all) for Allah, the Lord and Sustainer of the Worlds; He has no partner: this am I commanded, and I am the first of those who submit to Allah (in Islam).**» (6:159-163)

Islam also urges its followers to respect the feelings of those who differ with them in religion and condemns offensive language against those who differ with Muslims in faith as Allah commands:

«**Do not revile those whom they call upon besides Allah, lest they revile Allah in their ignorance out of spite. Thus have We made alluring to each people its own doings. In the**

end will they return to their Lord, and we shall then tell them the truth of all that they did.﴾ (6:108)

Islam, therefore, commands Muslims to attract the non-Muslims towards their Faith with the beauty of its precepts, by the guidance of comely examples and behavior, as opposed to the Guidance that only Allah bestows on whom He will. The Almighty and Most Majestic said in the Qur'an:

﴿Say, The Truth is from your Lord: Let him who will, believe and let him who will, reject and disbelieve: for the wrong-doers We have prepared a Fire whose (smoke and flames), are like the wall and roof of a tent, will hem them in: if they implore relief they will be granted water like melted brass, that will scald their faces: How dreadful the drink! How uncomfortable a couch to recline on!﴾ (18:29)

Islam enunciates justice and dispenses it even to its Non-believers. Allah, the Almighty, states in the Glorious Qur'an:

﴿Now then, for that (reason) call (them to the Faith), and stand steadfast as you art commanded, nor follow their vain desires; but say: 'I believe in the Book which Allah has sent down; and I am commanded to judge justly between you. Allah is our Lord and your Lord: for us (is the responsibility for) our deeds, and for you (is the responsibility for) your deeds, there is no contention between you and us (in this). Allah will bring us together, and to Him is (our) final goal.﴾ (42:15)

Islam gave man the full freedom of choice in terms of faith. They may accept or reject any faith or belief. Islam gave the freedom to the People of the Book and previous Scriptures to maintain their faith and practices. Islam forbids the dismantling of the churches and synagogues. Islam prohibits the breaking and destruction of the cross of the Christians. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) is reported to have said concerning the people of the previous Scriptures:

“Leave them alone in terms of faith” (Tabari)

Islam gave the people of the previous Scriptures the rights as their law dictates, and to eat, drink and wear what their religion permits them to do. Islam also entitles the people of the previous Scriptures to practice the practices of their religion insofar as marriage, marital relationship, divorce and other relations are concerned.

To demonstrate a practical example, Omar bin al-Khattab (رضي الله عنه) the second Caliph, applied such provisions when he came to the Resurrection Church in Jerusalem, and the time for Muslims' prayer entered. Omar (رضي الله عنه) left the Church, went outside, and offered the prayer outside the Church, and informed the priest of the church, “Had I offered my prayer inside the Church, some Muslims could have claimed in the future that The Church is a place where Omar

offered his prayer and taken that as an excuse to destroy the Church, and erect a Mosque, in its place.” [Reported from the History of Imam Ibn Jareer at-Tabari]

Similarly, Omar (رضي الله عنه) offered a pledge of trust as follows, “This is a pledge of security offered by Omar bin al-Khattab; the Leader of the Believers, to the inhabitants of Ilea, in terms of Peace. Omar gives them his pledge to have security and peace with their lives, wealth, churches, crosses and all their denominations. Their churches are not to be occupied, destroyed, reduced in size, nor to limit the Christian owned properties surrounding the churches. The crosses are not to be tampered with. The wealth of the Christians should not be encroached upon or possessed unlawfully, and that Christians will not be forced or compelled against their own will [i.e. to accept Islam].” [Reported from the History of Imam Ibn Jareer at-Tabari]

-> Encouragement of fruitful cooperation between Muslims and the People of the Book (Jews and Christians)

Cooperation is based on mutual interest and respect, and oriented to serve the best interests of the human society at large. Allah, the Wise the Almighty states as a general rule:

﴿Aid one another in righteousness and piety, and do not aid one another in sin and rancor: and fear Allah, for indeed Allah is strict in punishment.﴾ (5:2)

Islam exhorts upon its followers to have a meaningful and sincere dialogue with those who differ with their religion, as Allah, Most Wise orders:

﴿And do not dispute with the People of the Book, except with means better, unless it be with those of them who inflict wrong and injury; and say: ‘We believe in the Revelation which has come down to us and in that which came down to you; our God and your God is One; and it is to Him that we submit (in Islam).﴾ (29:46)

In fact, the approach that Islam pursued to call people of other Faiths is a constructive and objective dialogue that brings people together to the Word of Allah, the Almighty, and to His Divine Message and Teachings, as Allah said:

﴿Say: O People of the Book! Come to common terms of agreement between us and you: that we worship none but Allah; that we associate no partners with Him; that we erect not, from among ourselves, Lords and patrons other than Allah. If then they turn back, say: ‘Bear witness that we submit to Allah (in Islam).﴾ (3:64)

-> Sincerity and purity in advising others

All of the Messengers of Allah gave sincere advice to their peoples, and sincere advice and purity of intentions are the distinguishing features of Islam. The Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said, as narrated by Abu Hurairah (رضي الله عنه):

“Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, once inquired, 'Who, amongst you, would carry the following words of wisdom, act upon them, and teach them to others who would also act upon them?' Abu Hurairah, may Allah be pleased with him, answered positively. Upon that Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, held the hand of Abu Hurairah, may Allah be pleased with him, and counted five items, as follows: 1) Avoid all that is declared by Allah prohibited, thus you become the best worshipper of Allah, the Almighty; 2) Accept what had been predestined for you by Allah, thus you would be the richest man; 3) Be good to your neighbor, thus you would be characterized as a Believer; 4) Like for others what you like for yourself, thus you would be characterized as a Muslim; 5) Lessen your laughter, since too much laughter would cause the heart to die.” (Tirmidhi)

Islam calls upon all Muslims to tender a meaningful, and sincere free advice to all people.

This point is based on a statement of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ):

“Islam is the religion of advice. The people inquired, ‘O Prophet of Allah! To whom should advice be offered? Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: To Allah, to His Book, to His Prophet, to the leaders of the Muslims, and to the general body of Muslims” (Muslim)

In explanation of this tradition, we can say: A pure advice to Allah, the Almighty is to worship Him Alone, wholeheartedly; to reject and discard any rival set up to Allah, in idolatry; to commemorate the remembrance of Allah, the Almighty, by His Beautiful Attributes and Blessed Names; to accept fully that Allah alone is in charge of all the affairs of all creatures; to believe that whatever Allah, the Almighty, wills, would happen and whatever He does not, would never take place; and to follow the Commandments of Allah, and cease all actions that He forbade. A pure advice about Allah's Book is to firmly believe in the Divine Scripture to His Messenger, Muhammad (ﷺ); to accept all the laws therein. A pure advice about Allah's Prophet is to obey what he enjoined, shun away from what he refrained, believe his statements, love and respect him, and respond to his call, practices and instructions, and propagate them amongst people. A pure advice about Muslims' leadership is to obey the leaders as long as they do not call for, or impose any rules that disobey the commands of Allah and His Prophet (ﷺ); to assist them by guiding them to all the good points; not to rebel and fight against them so long as they apply Islam and its rules throughout their government agencies; and to offer them mature and the most pure advice kindly and gently. A pure advice for general Muslims is to guide them to the best in both their religious and worldly affairs; to assist them achieve their goals; to prevent any inconvenience against them; and to like for them what one likes for himself, and to hate to cause them any harm as one would hate to cause harm to his own soul.

-> Enjoining the good and forbidding the evil

Muslims are commanded to pursue every appropriate means that lead to enjoining good and forbidding evil, based on one's ability, knowledge, and position of authority, in order to secure peace, tranquility and stability in the society and community and counter against oppression, corruption and the spread of the "Law of the Jungle."

Allah, the Wise the Almighty states:

﴿Aid one another in righteousness and piety, and do not aid one another in sin and rancor: and fear Allah, for indeed Allah is strict in punishment.﴾ (5:2)

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

“Whoever sees evil should correct it by his hand; if not capable then let him correct it by his tongue; if one is not even capable of that then at least one should disapprove of it in his heart,” (Muslim)

The Messenger (ﷺ) made a simile about those who do wrong and harm others by their sins:

“The example of those who observe the boundaries of Allah and those who do not is like a group of people who traveled in a ship. The sailors of the ship decided to split the riders so a portion of them rode on the upper deck while the other portion rode the lower deck. When the people of the lower deck wanted to get water from the river, they had to go to the upper deck and ask them. The occupants of the lower deck of the ship decided to drill a hole in the wall of their portion of the ship. If the people of the upper deck permitted them to execute their plan they would all sink and drown in the water. But if the people of the upper deck refused to let them drill a hole and restricted them they would all be saved”

(Bukhari)

Allah the Omnipotent and Omniscient informs us that His Wrath descended upon previous nations as a result of their negligence to enjoin good and forbid evil:

﴿Nor did they forbid one another the inequities which they used to committ: evil indeed were the deeds which they did.﴾ (5:79)

-> Islamic forms of worship encourage brotherhood and egalitarian values

All forms of worship in Islam are egalitarian in nature and promote brotherhood and peace. The shahadah (testimony of faith), salat, (prayer) zakat (alms and charity), saum (fasting), hajj

(pilgrimage), amr bil-ma'roof wa nahi 'anil-munkar (commanding the good and prohibiting the evil), jihad (exertion and struggle) are obligatory equally upon all those Muslims who are able to fulfill the requirements according to their abilities. To become a Muslim the simple rite is to declare the testimony of faith: **LA ILAHA ILLALLAH MUHAMMAD-UR-RASULULLAH** (there is no god except Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah). In congregational prayer Muslims stand next to each other in rows without any class or other distinctions between them. Zakah promotes generosity and social cohesiveness between the richer and the poorer segments of the society. Fasting promotes realization of the basic needs of all humans, and control of these most basic physical desires. Hajj is the grand equalizer since all clothe themselves in simple white cloth and perform the same rituals in remembrance of the Prophet Abraham (عليه السلام) and glorification of the sacred precincts of Makkah. Commanding the good and prohibiting the evil and "Jihad" is by definition for the promotion and preservation of all that is good, wholesome and decent and combating of that which is all evil and morally corrupt.

-> Necessity of all to seek beneficial knowledge

The Omniscient Allah states:

﴿Is one who worships devoutly during the hours of the night prostrating himself or standing (in adoration), who takes heed of the Hereafter, and who places his hope in the Mercy of his Lord, (like one who does not)? Say: Are those equal, those who know and those who do not know? It is those who are endured with understanding that receive admonition.﴾ (39:9)

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

“Seeking knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim.” (Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah, & Baihaqi)

-> Environmental protection and preservation

Islam commands Muslims to protect and preserve the environment and warns against wanton destruction and pollution.

The general rule is as Allah says:

﴿Do not commit mischief on the earth after it has been set in order, and call on Him (Allah in prayer) with fear and longing: for the Mercy of Allah is always near to those who do good.﴾ (7:56)

Also, Allah, the Almighty, states:

«There is the type of man whose speech about this world's life may dazzle you, and he calls Allah to witness about what is in his heart; yet he is the most contentious of enemies. When he turns his back, his aim is to spread mischief everywhere through the earth and destroy crops and cattle. But Allah does not love mischief.» (2:205-5)

The most precious natural resources of clean pure water, air and fertile land are protected for the general good and utility. For instance, the Prophet (ﷺ) commanded for water conservation and preservation by asking the Muslims not to waste water during washing and ablution even when one is utilizing running river water, and he forbade washing of the parts of the body while making ablutions, more than three times saying:

"Whoever increases on that (more than three) does injustice and wrong." (Nasa'ee)

And Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) forbade people to urinate in stagnant water. (Muslim)

Islam also forbids people to place any excrement, refuse, or garbage in the middle of the public passages, or in the choice shady places which people use for rest and recreation.

-> Social Welfare including support of orphans, the needy and destitute

Allah the Exalted and Almighty said:

«Give full measure when you measure, and weigh with a scale balance that is straight; that is the most fitting and the most advantageous in the final determination.» (17:35)

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“The orphan's sponsor and I are in Paradise like these (and he held his two fingers, the index and the middle fingers, together, indicating how close they are).”

(Tirmidhi)

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“By Allah! One would not become a Believer until he likes for his brother what he likes for his own self”

(Muslim)

-> Principles of Endowment

Endowments in Islam are of two types:

Private Endowment: This type is dedicated to the progeny of the person who offers such endowment. The progeny and family members of the grantor would be well off, and they would not need to ask others to donate to them. This type has a stipulation, however, that the funds of the endowment would be given to the public interest charitable work upon the death of the last person of the progeny of the donor.

Public and General Endowment: This type is dedicated to charitable works, such as: building hospitals, schools, roads, public libraries, mosques, community centers, orphanages, elderly homes and other beneficial projects of general public interest for the community and the society at large.

Islamic Morals Promote Comprehensive Peace

The entire code of Islamic ethics seeks to promote and maintain peace, security and happiness in the society at large. This code enjoins brotherhood and all beneficial things that promote peace and forbids all types of actions that instigate evil and implant hatred and rancor in the hearts and minds of people. Accordingly if the members of the society apply the Islamic code of ethics, they would enjoy the peace, security, tranquility and happiness for which they naturally strive and yearn. All values of the Islamic morality produce a better person and an upright human being with noble traits of character admired universally: truthfulness, fairness, courage, generosity, patience, perseverance, kindness, and courteousness.

The essential criterion of the Islamic morality is to eradicate all the harmful and obnoxious actions, attitudes and behaviors which displease Allah the Almighty, Creator and Lord-Sustainer of mankind, and are therefore declared unlawful. If a Muslim practices any of the forbidden acts he would expose himself to either punishment in this world by the specified punishments of the Islamic law, or the Wrath of Allah, the Omnipotent and Irresistible in the Hereafter,

As the modern Arab poet Amir ash-Shu'ara` ash-Shauki declared in verse, explaining that nations of people are naught but their morals and characters.

**If the morals of the nation cease
the nation ceases!**

**Islam Enjoins Believers to Observe the Following Moral
Obligations and Recommendations to Promote Peace**

-> Islam enjoins truth

Allah the Exalted and Almighty said:

﴿O you who believe! Fear God and be with those who are truthful.﴾ (9:119)

Allah the Exalted and Almighty said:

﴿And he who brings the Truth and he who confirms and supports it - such are the men who are god fearing.﴾

(39:33)

-> Islam enjoins justice

Allah, the Exalted and Almighty said:

﴿Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and generosity to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, that you may receive admonition.﴾ (16:90)

Justice and fairness are commanded and required in all situations, when one is happy and satisfied, and when one is upset and unsatisfied, with Muslims and with non-Muslims alike. Allah the Exalted and Almighty said:

﴿O you who believe! Stand out firmly for Allah as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is next to Piety: and fear Allah. For Allah is well-aware with all that you do.﴾ (5:8)

And He, the Exalted, says:

﴿O you who believe! Stand out for justice, as witnesses to Allah, and even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be against rich or poor...﴾

(4:134)

-> Islam enjoins altruism

Philanthropy and benevolence are the results of sincere altruism, and the companions of the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him were especially noteworthy of this trait, offering their help and assistance to others solely for the Pleasure of Allah.

Allah the Exalted and Almighty says:

﴿And do good. Truly Allah loves those who do good.﴾

(2:195)

Allah, the Exalted, said:

﴿But those who, before them, had homes (in Medina) and had adopted the Faith, show their affection to such as came to them for refuge, and entertain no desire in their hearts for things given to the (latter), but give them preference over themselves, even though poverty was their (own lot). And those saved from the covetousness of their own souls; they are the ones that achieve prosperity.﴾ (59:9)

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

“Do favors for those who deserve to have them done for them and also for those who do not deserve to have them done for them. If the doer did the favor for those who deserve it, it is fine and good, and if not, the doer himself is one of those who are worthy for favors” (Tirmidhi)

-> Islam enjoins brotherhood

Allah, the Exalted, says:

﴿Verily the believers are but brothers...﴾ (49:10)

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“Do not envy one another; do not inflate prices by overbidding against one another; do not hate one another; do not harbor malice against one another; and do not enter into commercial transaction when others have entered into that (transaction); but be you, O slaves of Allah, as brothers. A Muslim is the brother of another Muslim; he neither oppresses him nor does he look down upon him, nor does he humiliate him. Piety is here, (and he pointed to his chest three times). It is enough evil for a Muslim to hold his brother Muslim in contempt. All things of a Muslim are inviolable for his brother-in-faith: his blood, his property and his honor.”

(Muslim)

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

"A Muslim is a brother to a Muslim. He should neither deceive him nor lie to him, nor leave him without assistance. Everything belonging to a Muslim is inviolable for a Muslim; his honor, his blood and property. Piety is here (and he pointed out to his chest thrice). It is enough for a Muslim to commit evil by despising his Muslim brother."
(Tirmidhi)

-> Islam enjoins the maintenance of righteous company

Muslims are advised to gain good company and avoid bad company. The Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“The example of good and evil companions is like that of a person who is carrying musk and the blacksmith who is blowing the fire of his furnace. The carrier of musk would either give you some of it or you may buy some from him or at least you would receive the smell of perfume from him. As for the blacksmith who is blowing fire, you may either burn your clothes, be disturbed with the sparks of his fire, or the least you would receive is bad odor coming from him and his place of work” (Bukhari & Muslim)

-> Islam enjoins reconciliation and peace making

Reconciliation is enjoined at all times and especially when there is a serious rift in relationship that may lead to increased conflict.

Allah the Almighty and Exalted said:

﴿**The Believers are but brothers so make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers; and fear God, that you may receive Mercy.**﴾ (49:10)

Allah, the Almighty and Exalted, says:

﴿**In most of their secret talks there is no good; but if one exhorts to a deed of charity or justice or reconciliation between men, (then secrecy is permissible): to him who does this, seeking the good Pleasure of Allah, We shall soon give a reward of the highest value.**﴾ (4:114)

-> Islam enjoins maintaining a good character and morals.

Good morals and virtues are essential for a better society. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

“**Amongst the best Believers are the persons with the best of morals and characteristics and those who are most kind to their families.**” (Tirmidhi)

And he (ﷺ) said:

“**I was sent only to perfect the good conduct**” and in another report “**to perfect the noble of conduct.**”

(Malik, Ahmad & al-Bazzar)

-> Islam enjoins generosity.

Generosity brings people closer to each other and enables the generous to gain the love and affection of others. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

“**Allah, the Almighty, loves two traits; to be good to others and to be generous to them. Similarly, Allah, the Almighty, hates two traits; to be mean to others and to be miser to people. [On the other hand,] If Allah, the Almighty, favors a person, He would employ him to assist others achieve their goals and fulfill their needs.**”

(Bukhari & Muslim)

The criterion of generosity in Islam is mentioned in the verse of the Glorious Qur'an:

﴿Do not tie your hand to your neck (like a niggard), nor stretch it forth to its utmost reach (being extravagant) so that you become blameworthy and destitute.﴾ (17:29)

The criterion is set to restrict people from exceeding limits. Allah, the Almighty said:

﴿And render to the kindred their due rights, as to those in need and want, and to the wayfarer: but do not squander your wealth in the manner of a spendthrift. Verily spendthrifts are brothers of the Evil Ones; and the Evil One is Ungrateful to his Lord.﴾ (17:26-7)

-> Islam enjoins on Muslims to hide mistakes and omissions of others

The Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“Whosoever alleviates a Believer's hardship of this world, Allah, the Almighty, would alleviate his hardship and difficulty of the Day of Judgment. Whosoever eases the terms on [a financially] stranded person, Allah, the Almighty, would ease his difficulties in both this world and the Hereafter. Whosoever hides the defects of a Muslim in this world, Allah, the Almighty, would hide the defects of that person both in this world and in the Hereafter. Allah, the Almighty, would continue to assist a slave-servant so long as such a person is extending his help and assistance to his Muslim brethren.” (Muslim)

-> Islam enjoins upon patience.

People are encouraged to be patient in order to perform their religious and mundane duties and to avoid all evils. Allah, the Almighty, states in the Glorious Qur'an:

﴿Now await in patience the Command of thy Lord: for verily you are in Our eyes: and celebrate the praises of thy Lord while you stand forth.﴾ (52:48)

Islam also urges and encourages Muslims to be patient on what they have been predestined for such as fear, poverty, hunger, lack of resources, terminal illness, etc. Allah the Almighty and Exalted said:

﴿Be sure that We shall test you with something of fear and hunger, some loss in goods or lives, or the fruits (of your toil), but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere. Who say, when afflicted with calamity: ‘To Allah we belong, and to Him is our return.’

They are those on whom (descend) blessings from their Lord, and Mercy, and they are the ones that receive guidance.﴾

(2:155-7)

Allah the Almighty and Exalted illustrates the reward of the patient people as follows in the Glorious Qur'an:

﴿Say: O My servants who believe! Fear your Lord. Good is (the reward) for those who do good in this world. Spacious is Allah's earth! Those who patiently persevere will truly receive a reward without measure!﴾ (3:10)

Part of mercy and forgiveness is to control the temper and forgive others even though one is capable of taking revenge, which strengthens the relationships and ties amongst people and creates a better atmosphere within the society. Allah promises a great reward for controlling one's temper. Allah, the Almighty, states in the Glorious Qur'an:

﴿Be quick in the race for forgiveness from your Lord, and for a Garden whose width is that (of the whole) of the heavens and of the earth, prepared for the righteous. Those who spend (for Allah's sake), whether in prosperity, or in adversity; who restrain anger and pardon; for Allah loves those who do good.﴾ (3:133-4)

Also, Allah, the Almighty, commands Muslims to practice righteousness at all times and in all circumstances and not to return evil when mistreated with evil acts. Allah the Almighty and Exalted said:

﴿Goodness and Evil are not equal. Repel Evil with that which is better; then it will be that the one between whom and you there was hatred will become as if he were your friend and intimate!﴾ (41:34)

The above examples are mere glimpses of what Islam commands Muslims to comply with in their personal and public lives for the Pleasure of Allah. The Book of Allah, the Qur'an, and the Sunnah of Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, provide additional commands and details related to these and other high and noble morals.

Examples of Acts Prohibited in Islam which help Promote Peace

Islam has denounced and condemned vehemently the following acts and strictly prohibited their practice in the path of promoting peace and security in the society, and eradicating or curtailing wrath, hatred, rancor, greed, and resentment which are the root causes of conflicts and violence.

-> Polytheism and Idolatry

Polytheism and idolatry inevitably cause conflict as clans, tribes and peoples compete and vie for recognition, status, dominance and tribute for their idols and associated ideologies and mythologies. If all people worshipped Allah the one and only God then the greatest root of violence would be eradicated.

Allah the Most Majestic said:

﴿And ask those of Our messengers whom we sent before you, 'Did we make other deities to be worshipped besides Allah?﴾ (43:45)

Allah the Most Glorious said:

﴿And We did not send a messenger before you, except that We revealed to him that there is no god worthy of worship except Me, so worship Me.﴾ (21:25)

Allah the Most Almighty and Majestic said:

﴿And verily, We have sent among every community a Messenger (proclaiming): "Worship Allah (alone), and avoid taghoot (Satan, idols, tyrants).﴾ (16:36)

Allah, the Exalted, said:

﴿Those who believe fight in the way of Allah, and those who disbelieve fight in the way of taghoot (Satan, idols, tyrants). So fight against the followers of Satan: Indeed the plot of Satan is feeble.﴾ (4:76)

-> Sorcery and magic of all types.

This prohibition is based on the numerous evidences like the saying of Allah:

﴿But neither of these two (angels (Haroot and Maroot) taught anyone (sorcery) till they had said (warning them): ‘Indeed, we are a trial, so do not disbelieve.﴾

(2:102)

And in the hadith of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ):

“**Avoid the seven destructive things.** People inquired: O Prophet of Allah! ‘What are these destructive things?’ He said: “**They are: associating others in the worship of Allah; sorcery and magic of all types; killing an innocent soul without any legitimate reason; dealing with interest and usury; eating up and abusing the orphan's funds; fleeing from the battlefield; falsely accusing innocent female believers with fornication, adultery, or moral corruption.**” (Bukhari & Muslim)

-> Aggression and oppression.

Allah (ﷻ) said:

﴿**The blame is only against those who oppress men with wrongdoing and insolently transgress beyond bounds through the land, defying right and justice; for such people there will be a grievous penalty.**﴾ (42:42)

Allah, the Almighty and Exalted stated

﴿**Say: The things that my Lord hath indeed forbidden are: shameful deeds, whether open or secret; sins and trespasses against truth or justice; assigning of partners to Allah for which He hath given no authority; and saying things about Allah of which you have no knowledge.**﴾ (7:33)

Allah, the Almighty also said:

﴿**If one amongst the pagans polytheists ask you for asylum, grant it to him so that he may hear the Word of Allah; and then escort him to where he can be secure. That is because they are men without knowledge.**﴾ (9:6)

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

"**Beware of injustice, for oppression will be darkness on the Day of Resurrection; and beware of stinginess because it doomed those who were before you. It incited them to shed blood and treat the unlawful as lawful.**" (Muslim)

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“Allah inspired me: Be humble so as no one oppresses another, and no one brags with pride over another.”

(Muslim)

Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

“Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, said: ‘My servants, I have made oppression unlawful for Me and unlawful for you, so do not commit oppression against one another...’”
(Muslim)

Islam urges to support both the oppressed and the oppressor by stopping the source of oppression.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

“Support and come to the aid of your brother whether he is oppressed or, he is the oppressor.”

A man who heard this inquired, I can understand supporting my brother if he is oppressed, but what about if he is the oppressor? Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) asserted,

“Support him by stopping him from his oppression: that is the way to support (in truth) the oppressor”

(Bukhari)

All lawful members of the society, regardless of creed or faith are entitled to full protection of their rights to life, property and wealth. For instance the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“He who kills (unlawfully) a non-Muslim residing under Islamic rule, would not smell the fragrance of Paradise. The fragrance of Paradise can be smelled at a distance of forty years.” (Bukhari)

-> Unkind treatment towards parents, children and kindred.

This is based on the verse revealed:

﴿Your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him, and that you be kind to parents. And if one or both of them attain old age in thy life, say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them, but address them in terms of honor. And, out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: My Lord! Bestow on them thy Mercy just as they cherished me in childhood.﴾ (17:23-24)

And the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“The happiness and dismay of Allah is from the parents’ happiness and dismay with their child, and the unhappiness and dismay of Allah is from the unhappiness and dismay of parents from their children.” (Tirmidhi)

Islam teaches benevolence towards all kindred. This is based on the verse revealed in the Glorious Qur’an,

﴿Then, is it to be expected of you, if you were put in authority, that you will do mischief, in the land, and break your ties with kith and kin? Such are the men whom Allah has cursed for He has made them deaf and has blinded their sight.﴾ (47:22-3)

This is also based on the tradition of the Prophet of Allah (ﷺ):

“A person breaking family ties will not enter Paradise”

(Bukhari & Muslim)

Breaking ties with family and the kindred implies many things: absence of mutual exchange of visits; carelessness towards the needy relatives; and indifference to extend financial and social assistance to the destitute family members.

Islam appreciates the charity from the rich to the destitute. A charitable donation from a rich family member to a needy family member carries a double reward since it is both charity, on the one hand, and a type of re-establishment of bonds between family members. If a person is poor and is unable to extend financial support to relatives, Allah rewards even his visit, care and affection since they are a type of charity and are good deeds. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

“Establish a good rapport with your family members and immediate relatives, even by as little as greeting them and asking about their affairs and health.”

(Bazzar & Tabrani)

-> Adultery, fornication, slander etc

It is a known fact that much conflict, fighting and murder takes place due to “love triangles” wherein people fight over their legal or illegal sexual partners. Islam has cut all the pathways to illegal sexual relations to preserve the chastity and purity of the people of the society, and to prevent conflict, illegitimate children and abortion.

Allah the Exalted and Almighty said:

﴿**Nor come nigh to adultery: for it is a shameful (deed) and an evil way, opening the road (to many other evils).**﴾ (17:32)

And He said:

﴿**Those who slander chaste women, indiscreet but believing, are cursed in this life and in the Hereafter: for them is a grievous Penalty.**﴾ (24:23)

And Allah the Exalted and Almighty said:

﴿**Those who love (to see) abhorrent acts broadcast among the Believers, will have a grievous Penalty in this life and in the Hereafter: Allah knows, and you do not know.**﴾ (24:19)

The Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) convinced a young man of the illegality of illicit sexual relations in the following conversation:

“A young man came to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and asked: ‘O Messenger of Allah, permit me (with special license) to commit fornication (and adultery).’ The people started to rebuke him harshly but the Prophet sat close to him and asked: ‘**Would you like it for your mother?**’ He replied ‘No, by Allah, may Allah make me a sacrifice for you!’ The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: ‘**And thus the people do not like it for their mothers.**’ He said: ‘**Would you like it for your daughter?**’ ‘No’ he replied. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: ‘**And thus the people do not like it for their daughters.**’ He said: ‘**Would you like it for your paternal aunt?**’ ‘No’ he replied. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: ‘**And thus the people do not like it for their paternal aunts.**’ He said: ‘**Would you like it for your maternal aunt?**’ ‘No’ he replied. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: ‘**And thus the people do not like it for their maternal aunts.**’ Then the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, put his hand on the youth and said: ‘**O Allah forgive his sin and purify his heart and make him chaste (fortify his abstinence from sexual sins).**” [Reported by Imam Ahmad from the tradition narrated by Abu Umamah.] Here we find an example of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) patiently convincing this man by analogies about the injustice of double standards: since no one wants his ownself to be exploited and abused, then how should he allow himself to exploit others. The golden rule, as it is called, is expressed in the famous tradition of the Messenger (ﷺ): “**None of you believes until he loves for his brother that which he loves for himself.**”

(Bukhari & Muslim)

-> Intoxicants and Gambling

As it is well known, intoxicated individuals are more likely to commit violent crimes than sober individuals. Gambling is also the cause of much conflict. Allah the Almighty states:

﴿O you who believe! Intoxicants, gambling, and divination by arrows, are an abomination of Satan's handiwork: avoid all such (abominations) that you may prosper. Satan's plan is but to excite enmity and hatred between you, with intoxicants and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of God, and from prayer: will you not then abstain?﴾ (5:90-91)

-> Stealing, robbery, unlawful acquisition of property and wealth

Such acts are bound to create hatred and resentment, and provoke conflicts in the society, leading to insecurity and chaos.

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“Whoever takes a right of a Muslim, Allah, the Almighty, would cause him to dwell in the Fire of Hell on the Day of Judgment and restrict him from entering Paradise. One of the Companions who was present at the time inquired, 'O Prophet of Allah! What if the item that a person takes was negligible? Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: “Even if the item is as insignificant as a wooden tooth brush (from an Arak tree branches)” (Muslim)

-> Monopoly and hoarding

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Only a sinner monopolizes (the food and other items of public need)” (Muslim)

-> Misuse of the wealth and the assets of an orphan.

Orphans are weak and incapable of managing their funds. An orphan's guardian is responsible to manage wisely the finance and the affairs of his guarded orphan to the best of his ability. Allah warns saying:

«**Those who unjustly eat up the property of orphans, eat up a fire into their own bodies: they will soon be enduring a blazing fire.**» (4:10)

-> Abuse of authority

A Muslim ruler or any person in a position of authority must be just and honest with his people and must not do wrong to them or betray them in any way. As Allah said:

«**Think not that Allah is heedless of the deeds of those who do wrong. He only gives them respite against a Day when the eyes will stare in horror.**» (14:42-43)

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

“If Allah entrusted a person with an authority but the person entrusted did not offer his best possible advice to his constituents, such person would not be allowed to enter Paradise” (Bukhari)

-> Torture

The companion Hesham ibn Hakim ibn Hizam once passed by a group of Nabatcans in the Levant who were made to stay in the sun. He said: What's wrong with these people? They said: They are imprisoned because they did not pay the jizya. Hesham said: "I witness that I have heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) saying:

"Allah tortures those who torture people in this lifetime." He said: "And their ruler 'Umair Ibn Sa'd at the time was in Palestine, so he went to him and informed him who in turn passed his orders so they were discharged." (Muslim)

-> False testimonies and oaths

False testimonies are major sins. In fact, if a person intentionally insists on false testimonies on a regular basis, he would be considered out of the realm of Islam. Allah the Almighty, states:

﴿Those who do not witness falsehood, and, if they pass by futility, pass by it with honorable (avoidance).﴾ (25:72)

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

“Should I inform you about the most heinous sins? The Companions said yes. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: **(The most heinous sins are) to associate others in worshipping Allah, and to be bad and disobedient to your parents.** Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) was leaning on the floor, then he sat straight and said: “...and to give a false statement and to give a false testimony.” Allah's Messenger kept repeating the last statement until the Companions wished that he would quit repeating it.”

(Bukhari)

This type of oath is intentional and made to secure some unlawful gains. This oath is called *ghamoos* (immersing) since it immerses the oath taker in the Fire of Hell. Allah, the Almighty states:

﴿As for those who sell the faith they owe to Allah and their own sacredly pledged word for a small price, they shall have no portion in the Hereafter. Allah will not speak to them or look at them on the Day of Judgment, nor will He cleanse them (of sins): they shall have a grievous Penalty.﴾ (3:77)

This is also based on the tradition of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ):

“Whosoever takes the right of another Muslim by his right hand (i.e. by the false oath) would be entitled for the Fire of Hell and would be deprived the entry of Paradise.” A man raised a question as to even if the thing that he takes from his Muslim brother's rights is negligible? Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: **Even if the right of the Muslim brother was a tooth brush (from the branch of the Arak tree)”** (Muslim)

-> Betrayal and breach of trust in contracts.

Islam enjoins upon Muslims to be truthful. Islam commands to fulfill promises and warns against breaking promises and dishonoring contracts. Islam stresses on fulfilling all trusts to the right people and warns against denying even an insignificant amount entrusted to a person as a trust. Allah the Almighty states:

﴿O you who believe! Betray not the trust of Allah and the Messenger, nor misappropriate knowingly things entrusted to you.﴾ (8:27)

Islam declares keeping secrets as one of the acts of trust. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

“If a person said something to another person, then turned away, such a statement becomes a trust to the listener” (Tirmidhi & Abu Dawood)

Similarly, Islam categorized seeking a consultation, as a trust as well. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

“A consulted person is entrusted (i.e. with whatever he hears from the person seeking his consultation and honest opinion and advice)” (Tirmidhi & Abu Dawood)

Islam promotes trustworthiness. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

“There is no faith for a person who is untrustworthy. There is no religion for a person who breaches his pledge of allegiance.” (Ahmed & Baihaqi)

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“If a person possesses four vices, he would be categorized as a full hypocrite. And if one possesses any one vice of the four, he would be partially a hypocrite unless he cures himself from the vice: to lie whenever he speaks; to break the promise; to betray the trust; to breach a covenant.” (Bukhari & Muslim)

According to another narration reported by Muslim:

“A person would be categorized as such even if he maintains his daily prayers, observes the fast of Ramadan, and claims that he is a Muslim.”

-> Slander and backbiting

Backbiting is to mention things about people that they hate to be known even though such facts are true. This kind of act jeopardizes the honor and dignity of the person attacked, breeds hatred and disdain among people, which may lead to violence. Slander includes publishing false news and libel.

Allah the Almighty states:

﴿Woe to every (kind of) scandal-monger and backbiter.﴾

(104:1)

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“Do you know what is backbiting?” The Companions present at the time said, Allah and His Messenger know best! Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: **“It is to mention something behind the back of a person, which he despises for others to know about him.”** One of the companions inquired, O Prophet of Allah! What if the point raised behind his back truly exists in him, would this still be categorized as an act of backbiting? Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) replied: **“Backbiting is to mention a vice that exists in him whereas if he doesn't have such a vice, then it is slandering”** (Muslim)

-> Name-calling and mocking others

Allah said in the Glorious Qur'an:

﴿O you who believe! Let not some men among you mock others: it may be that the (latter) are better than the (former): nor let some women mock others: it may be that the (latter) are better than the (former): nor defame nor be sarcastic to each other, nor call each other by offensive nicknames: evil indeed is a name connoting wickedness after one has believed: and those who do not desist are (indeed) doing wrong﴾ (49:11)

-> Hatred, contempt and resentment against others.

Such vices provoke acting in revenge in many possible ways. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) was asked:

“O Prophet of Allah! Who is the best type of man? Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: **“Every warm hearted person, and every true person.”** The Companions who were present raised a question to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) saying, O Prophet of Allah! We know the true person, but what about the warm-hearted person? Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: **“He is the pious, pure person, the sinless one, with no oppression or transgression on the rights of others, a person who possesses no hatred or envy in his heart for others”** (Tirmidhi)

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) illustrated the results of envy as follows:

“Envy and jealousy eat up the good deeds as the fire eats up the wood” (Abu Dawood)

-> Social boycott (unless under strict conditions)

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

“Do not boycott one another, do not turn your backs on each other, do not hate one another, do not envy one another: all of you should be (true) slave-servants of Allah like brethren. A Muslim is not allowed to boycott his Muslim brethren for more than three (days)” (Bukhari & Muslim)

And in another version of the narration:

“A Muslim is not permitted to boycott his Muslim brother for a period exceeding three nights, upon meeting one another, each one swerving to a different direction and shunning each other. The best of the two is the one who initiates the greeting to the other.”

-> Cursing and abusive language

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

“People who curse would not be permitted to be witnesses or interceders on the Day of Judgment”

(Muslim)

Islam prohibits even cursing enemies and encourages a Muslim to pray for the guidance of such people to the Right and Straight Path. This is based on Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) who was once asked: “O Prophet of Allah! Shouldn't you pray against pagans and idol worshippers? He said:

“I am only commissioned as a mercy (for mankind) and I was not commissioned to curse others” [Reported by Muslim]

-> Stinginess and miserliness

Islam considers wealth as a trust that Allah entrusted to man for a specific period of his lifetime to be used wisely and spent in accordance with Allah's commands: for living expenses and essential needs, for charity and for righteous deeds. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“A treacherous, stingy and miserly person who brags time and again about his donation and assistance to other needy and poor individuals, would never enter Paradise” (Tirmidhi)

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) is also reported to have warned about disastrous consequences of a society where miserliness becomes a common practice, saying:

“Beware of oppression. Oppression is darkness on the Day of Judgment. Beware of greed and miserliness, as it destroyed people before you. Greed and miserliness compelled people (before you) to shed the blood of their own people and pushed them to make lawful what was unlawful and forbidden.” (Muslim)

-> Extravagance and lavish spending.

Allah has commanded a Muslim to abstain from being lavish.

﴿Eat and drink, but waste not by excess; Verily He loves not the excessive.﴾ (7:31)

Allah the Almighty states:

﴿And render to the kindred their due rights, and (also) to those in want, and to the wayfarer: and do not squander (your wealth) in the manner of a spendthrift. Verily, spendthrifts are brothers of the devils; and the Satan is ungrateful to his Lord (Himself).﴾ (17:26-27)

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

“Allah, the Almighty, prohibits you from being disobedient to your mothers, from declining to give the poor and needy for the cause of Allah, from asking people charity if you do not truly need it, and from burying girls alive. Allah also dislikes for you to be rumor mongering, to often ask people to give you, and to waste funds foolishly.” (Bukhari & Muslim)

-> Exaggeration and extremism

Allah, the Almighty states:

﴿Allah intends every facility for you; He does not want to put you to difficulties. (He wants you) to complete the prescribed period, and to glorify Him in that He has guided you; that perhaps you will be grateful.﴾ (2:185)

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

“Offer glad tidings and do not chase people away. Ease the life of people and do not make it difficult and unbearable for them.” (Bukhari & Muslim)

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

“Beware of going beyond the bounds of the religion. The people before you were destroyed by going to extremes in the religion.”

(Nisaa`e, Ibn Maajah, Ibn Khuzaimah & al-Haakim)

-> Arrogance and false pride.

Allah, the Almighty said:

﴿And do not puff your cheek (in pride) at men, nor walk in insolence through the earth; for God does not love an arrogant boaster. And be moderate in thy pace, and lower thy voice; for the harshest of sounds without doubt is the braying of the ass.﴾ (31:18-19)

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

“A person, whose heart contains an atom weight of arrogance, would not enter Paradise.” One of the Companions who was present at the time, asked Allah's Messenger (ﷺ): “O Prophet of Allah! One of us likes to wear good clothes and good shoes [so is that arrogance?] Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: **“Arrogance is to deny the truth and to have contempt towards others”** (Muslim)

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) also said:

“Allah would not look on the Day of Judgment at the one who drags his clothes in arrogance.” (Bukhari & Muslim)

-> All unjust acts leading to disputes, quarrels and feuds among people.

Allah the Almighty states:

﴿And hold fast, all together, by the Rope which Allah (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves. And remember with gratitude Allah's favor on you, for you were enemies and He joined your hearts in love so that by His Grace you became

brethren. And you were on the brink of the Pit of Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus Allah makes His Signs clear to you that you may be guided.﴾ (3:103)

Similarly, Islam bans all forms of suspicion and evil thoughts about others. Allah, the Almighty and Majestic states:

﴿O you who believe! Avoid suspicion as much as you can, for suspicion in some cases is a sin: and spy not on each other, nor speak ill of each other behind their backs. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Nay, but you would abhor it. And fear Allah: for Allah is Oft Returning, Most Merciful.﴾ (49:12)

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

“Avoid suspicion as suspicion (leads to) the most untruthful speech one could ever make.” (Bukhari)

-> Misrepresentation of facts and false reporting

Allah the Almighty, said:

﴿O you who believe! If a wicked person comes to you with any news, ascertain the truth of it lest you harm people unwittingly and afterwards become full of repentance for what you have done.﴾ (49:6)

-> Fits of Rage, Temper tantrums, and use of offensive and abusive language.

Thus a Muslim is ordered to always control anger. Allah the Almighty and Majestic states:

“Those who avoid the greater crimes and shameful deeds and even when they are angry, they forgive.” (42:37)

The Messenger of Allah said (ﷺ):

"The strong man is not the one who wrestles, but the strong man is in fact the one who controls himself in a fit of rage." (Bukhari & Muslim)

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

“A Believer is not a person who attacks the integrity of others, curses others, uses foul language and is unpleasant in his speech with others.” (Tirmidhi)

Abu Hurairah, may Allah be pleased with him, reported:

A man asked the Prophet (ﷺ) to give him advice, and he said: **"Do not get angry."** The man repeated that several times and he replied (every time): **"Do not get angry."** (Bukhari)

-> Glee and malicious joy over the sufferings of others.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

“Do not demonstrate any happiness upon seeing your brother’s tragedy. Allah would be Merciful to the latter and afflict you with such problems.” (Tirmidhi)

-> Undue interference with things that do not concern him

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

“One of the signs of being a good Muslim is to leave that which does not concern him.”
[Reported by Tirmidhi]

-> Unjust ruling and sentences

Laws are derived from the Qur’an and Sunnah and thus there are no legislators except Allah in Islam. Therefore a judge is entrusted with interpreting the law and applying it justly in all individual cases, and if he becomes unjust in his verdicts, he is betraying the sacred trust. The Wise and Sublime states,

“...and whosoever does not judge by what Allah hath revealed, then indeed, they are the disbelievers.” (5:44)

This is also based on the Hadith of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ):

“The judges are three, two of which are the dwellers of the Hellfire and one is in Paradise. A judge who knows the truth and judges accordingly would be dwelling in

Paradise. A judge who knows the truth but purposely deviates from it would be dwelling in the Hellfire. The judge who passes his sentence without possessing appropriate knowledge would be dwelling in the Hellfire.” One of the Companions, who was present at the time raised the following question, “What is the sin of the judge who was not truly aware of the truth and reality of the case? Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) commented, **His sin is that he should not function as a judge until he is knowledgeable.”** (Hakim)

-> Spying on others

Islam bans spying on others by all means as mentioned by Allah:

﴿O you who believe! Avoid suspicion as much as you can for suspicion in some cases is a sin, and spy not on each other, nor speak ill of each other behind their backs. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Nay, but you would abhor it. And fear Allah: for Allah is Oft Returning, Most Merciful.﴾ (49:12)

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

“A person who listens in onto the conversation of others who hate him to listen in would have molten lead poured into his ears on the Day of Judgment” (Bukhari)

-> Spreading the mistakes of others, and slandering

A tattle-tale breaks up amiable relationships between people and breeds animosity, and creates a situation of chaos in the society. Allah, the Almighty states

﴿Heed not the type of despicable man, ready with oaths, a slanderer, going about with calumnies.﴾ (68:10-11)

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said,

“A slanderer would not be allowed to enter Paradise.”

(Bukhari & Muslim)

One of the sure results of slander is the spread of rumors, hatred and anger among members of the community. As such, this may lead to murders or a disorder in the community. Islam neither accepts nor condones such situation.

-> Exploitation of others, especially the easily victimized like the destitute or elderly.

Islam aims to establish a well-integrated society with solid fraternal bonds. Allah the Almighty and Majestic said:

«Serve Allah, and join not any partners with Him; and do good to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, those in need, neighbors who are near and neighbors who are strangers, the Companion by your side, the way-farer (ye meet) and what your right hands possess: for Allah does not love the arrogant, the vainglorious.» (4:36)

-> Inconveniences to others, especially neighbors

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“By Allah! A person would not become a [full] Believer! By Allah! A person would not become a [full] Believer! [Repeating the same phrase twice.] The Companions asked, 'O Prophet of Allah! Who is this person?' Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) commented, He is the one with whom a person whose neighbor is neither safe nor secure against [all of his] harms and evils.” (Bukhari & Muslim)

Conclusion

Islam builds the foundation for friendly relationships between men on the principles of public and mutual interests of all the parties concerned. Never is there to be any compulsion or force for the acceptance of Islam. Islam wishes well for all regardless of color, creed, geographic location and nationality. Its laws and principles promote universal modes of righteousness, benevolence and justice. Muslims are commanded to love for the cause of Allah and hate for the cause of Allah, and never for any other special interests, worldly desires or whims. One does not love or hate the person per say, but loves the good and hates the evil shown by the behavior of that person. Allah the Almighty states:

﴿**Hold to forgiveness; command what is right; but turn away from the ignorant.**﴾
(7:199)

Islam brings people from the darkness of ignorance and injustice, to the true light of guidance and justice. Allah the Wise and Sublime states:

﴿**Allah is the Protector and Ally of those who have faith: He leads them from the depths of darkness into the light. The disbelievers are the patrons and allies of the taghoot (Satan, idols, tyrants): from light they lead them into the depths of darkness. They will be Companions of the Fire to dwell therein (forever).**﴾ (2:257)

Islam educates all Muslims to be peaceful, forgiving, patient and caring. Islam seeks all means to establish social justice in the society and protect the rights of all citizens of the Islamic state and encompasses them all in its welfare system. Islam exhorts upon Muslims to be good to others without expecting a favor rather seeking the reward from Allah, their Lord Most Bountiful. Islam educates Muslims to respect and honor the divine instructions and laws so that every member in the society feels secure, safe and peaceful, except those who, by their criminal activities, deserve to be punished with justice for transgression. Islam educates Muslims to be selfless and to like for others as they wish for themselves so that the entire society benefits: the old are to be kind to the young and minor; the young are to be merciful, respectful and helpful to the old; the rich to be generous to the poor; all should seek to aid the needy. Islam aims for the ideal society wherein the statement of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) would be fulfilled:

“The example of the believers in their love and affection to one another is like that of the organs of one body. If one organ aches, the rest of the body becomes feverish, and is affected.”

We hope that this booklet helps as a guide for the seekers of the truth, those who would seek to achieve the bliss in Paradise, seekers of the true salvation from the Hellfire and its everlasting and humiliating torture, and the honorable abode of Paradise.

Since we all know that death is the final destiny of every living being, the crucial question is: what happens after death? Muslims like all believers in scriptures believe in the Resurrection after death wherein all will meet just rewards or punishments in an eternal life, either in the bliss of Gardens of Paradise or the blazing fires of Hell. As for those who sincerely accept Islam as a way of life, they surely took the safe path that leads to happiness and the bliss after death. As for those who commit evil acts in this world against innocent people and without any just basis, they would be punished and penalized for what they have committed against innocent people. However, if one commits any act of disobedience against the Commandments of Allah, the Almighty; it is totally up to the Will and Mercy of Allah. If He Wishes to torture the evildoer by His justice, there is no one to intercede on his behalf unless Allah permits. And if Allah wishes to pardon such an evildoer, He would do so out of His Mercy and Generosity.

As for those who turn away from Islam, or turn their backs to it and die as non- Muslims, we do believe that such people would stay in the Fire of Hell eternally.

Therefore, we urge every sensible, thoughtful and respective human being to seek true salvation for his soul by correct actions and based on the Mercy of Allah, Most Merciful. We encourage every person to seek the Right and Straight Path that leads to Paradise; that is the Path of Allah; the Path of Islam; the total submission to Allah. This is the Path that leads to happiness for eternity. Allah the Almighty says of those enemies who spread false propaganda against Islam:

﴿**Their intention is to extinguish Allah's Light by their mouths: but Allah will complete (the revelation of) His Light, even though the disbelievers may detest (it).**﴾ (61:8)

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“By the One in Whose Hand the soul of Muhammad is! No member of this nation (to be called), no Jew or Christian who hears of me and does not believe in what I was sent with, but he will be of the people of the Fire.”

(Muslim)

الحمد لله رب العالمين

وصلى الله وسلم على نبينا محمد وآله وسلم

All Praise is due to Allah alone, the *Rubb* of the Worlds

And may Allah exalt the mention of His Prophet and his household and render him safe from every derogatory thing

If you would like to receive more information about Islam, do not hesitate to contact us:

1) Email:

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2) You may also visit the following sites:

<http://www.islamland.org>

<http://www.sultan.org>

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