

Guide to UNDERSTANDING ISLAM

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ISTANBUL/TURKEY

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1.Introduction 2. The General Features of Islam 3. Belief Essentials of Islam 4. The Goals Given by Islam to a Human Being 5. Essentials of Action & Five Pillars 6. The Means toward Success 7. Conclusion 8. Questions & Answers

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In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

(Quran: 1/1)

Say, "Observe what is in the heavens and earth."

(Quran: 10/101)

And say, "My Lord, increase me in knowledge."

(Quran: 20/114)

Indeed, Allah orders justice and the doing of good [to others] and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that you may be mindful.

(Quran: 16/90)

There is no compulsion in religion; Truly the right way has become clearly distinct from error.

(Quran: 2/256)

And the (best) result belongs to the righteous.

(Quran: 28/83)

Allah will say, "This is the Day when the truthful will benefit from their truthfulness. For them are gardens [in Paradise] beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever, Allah being pleased with them, and they with Him. That is the great success."

(Quran: 5/119)

Then did you think that We created you uselessly
and that to Us you would not be returned?
(Quran: 23/115)

FOREWORD

I praise and thank Allah for all His favors and especially His biggest favor which is Islam, and for enabling me to listen to His message, the Quran, and for making me know His final messenger, and also for enabling me to share the truth through this book. Peace be upon His messengers.

Our goal in composing this book is to give concise but comprehensive information about Islam. It is written especially for those who are recently acquainted with Islam. We expect it to be useful for those who know Islam as well, especially in answering questions asked by non-Muslims.

I would like also to thank certain people who have been very helpful in producing this book.

I firstly thank my wife Naciye Tosun and my children Muhammed, Meryem Büşra and Ibrahim Eren for their support in my works.

I also thank the Imams Mr. Emrullah Hatiboğlu, Mr. Hasan Kara, Mr. İshak Kızılarıslan, all muazzins and other staff of Sultanahmet Mosque for their support in providing a motivating environment in the preparation of this book.

I ask Allah to make this book helpful in better understanding Islam. I also ask His forgiveness for any mistakes that may have happened in it.

Ender TOSUN

SUMMARY

When we observe this universe, based on our logic and based on our personal qualifications as thankfulness and justice, we may ask “Where do all these favors come from?” Then if we reason carefully upon what we observe we may perceive the One Active Creator who creates and sustains all.

For example, we see billions of similar things; we see that everything is part of systems; we see that everything is subject to change. These may make us understand that everything comes from one same source; everything is created by One Creator; and that this Creator is the only absolute; and that anything else is subject to His powers and to His will. Then those billions of favors to which we are subject will create on us a pressure to thank.

Then we may conclude that this Creator who enabled us to communicate may have communicated with us in a human language as well. So we may look for any such communications that He may have given us. Then indeed we notice people who claim to have received messages from the Creator, namely messengers like Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad and so on (Peace be upon them).

And we notice that the essential message of the Creator through all these messengers is: “Believe in your True One Lord and do good works”. This is the central message of Islam.

In His messages the Creator introduces Himself as the Beneficent, the Active Doer of what He wills, and the Wise. Then He teaches us that we and this universe are not created and sustained without reason.

Consequently His favors and powers do not happen only temporarily as in the present parts of our lives. And we are informed that after the present phase in which we live

there will be a permanent phase. In this permanent phase His favors and powers will be implemented permanently. In this next phase we will see the consequences of whatever good or evil we do in this phase. And in the present part of our life we taste also the consequences of His powers to a certain extent as His other creation do. And in this part we will make our “choice” about where we stand regarding the truth and about what kind of permanent life we want.

Also we notice in these messages that to be successful we have also to improve ourselves in parallel with the divine values which Our Lord loves such as truthfulness, humility, thankfulness, kindness, justice... And only if we have these qualifications, we may be loved by Our Lord, love Him and be careful of Him. So, if we sincerely love Him we will improve; and if we improve we will love Him more and be loved by Him.

And to improve ourselves in terms of these qualifications, we need to follow the guidance of Our Creator. By following it; we will be in harmony with the Truth; we will reach Allah’s permanent favors prepared for His righteous servants; Allah will be pleased with us; and we will be satisfied. These are the ultimate goals of our lives according to Islam.

And all these and their details, we have been told once more and forever in our Creator’s final guidance which is the Holy Quran which was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him), 14 centuries ago.

1 INTRODUCTION

The word “Islam” means submission to Allah¹ and peace in Arabic. It also means peace by submitting to the Merciful God, by following His guidance. As the name of the religion, it can be defined as feeling and knowing that Allah is with us wherever we are; doing good deeds²; and refraining from bad deeds with the intention to invoke His pleasure and His mercy.

“Islam” is a name given by Allah Himself to this religion in the Holy Book of Islam. It is not a name given by a marginal group.

Islam is a way shown to us by Allah the All-Knower, the Wise to lead us to the biggest success³.

The main source of Islam is the Quran⁴ which is the Holy Book of Islam. This book was revealed only to Prophet Muhammad⁵ (Peace be upon him) during 23 years in the 7th century. In the Quran the speaker as the first person is Allah, and Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) related His words to mankind. Throughout this book you will have the opportunity to read many quotations from the Quran.

¹Allah is a special name of the Creator, the Sustainer of the universe. Detailed information about Him will be given in this book.

² Works

³ We will discuss the biggest success in our life in detail in the following parts.

⁴Transliterated also as Koran, Coran, Qur'an, Kuran, al-Qur'an. One of its meanings is “the Recitation”.

⁵Transliterated also as Muhammet, Mahomet, Muhammed, Mohammed, Mohammad. Muhammad is an Arabic word which means “Praiseworthy”. Ahmet, Ahmed, Ahmad are other versions of Muhammad, having the same meaning.

As Allah says in the Quran, Islam is an important favor for human beings:

This day I have perfected for you your religion,
And completed My favor upon you,
And have approved for you,
Islam as religion.⁶
(Quran: 5/3⁷)

2 THE GENERAL FEATURES OF ISLAM

2.1 ISLAM IS BASED ON LOGIC

In the holy book of Islam, Allah makes reference to the concepts of logic, reasoning, knowing, observing and understanding in more than 1000 places. We have to question, reason. In the Quran, Allah forbids following blindly the assumptions of our society and our ancestors.

In Islam there are no dogmas. The way to be a Muslim and a good Muslim starts and continues with the use of logic. Of course, this does not exclude accepting knowledge related from logically reliable sources.

Only those who have intelligence are considered as responsible in Islam.

⁶ The Quranic quotations contained herein are mostly taken from the Saheeh International translation and used by permission. Copyright 2010-2012 Saheeh International

⁷ Regarding the quotations from the Quran, in the statements as “(Quran: a/b)”, (a) denotes the number of the chapter of the Quran and (b) denotes the number of the verse(s) of the relevant chapter.

Islam is easy to understand. Allah says in the Quran:

Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth,
And the alternation of the night and the day, are signs
for those of understanding.

Who remember Allah⁸ while standing or sitting or
[⁹lying] on their sides,

⁸ In the Quran, the speaker is Allah as the first person. However, in many places instead of using the pronoun “I”, He uses His names or the pronoun “He”.

There are reasons for these uses: Firstly this makes easier to read the Book: If Allah had always used the pronoun “I”, the reader would always recite as if he is speaking as Allah. On the other hand, the use of Allah and His other names can give more specific meanings together with the use of the pronoun “I”. For example, in the verse 2/21, Allah says: “O mankind, worship your Lord ...” instead of “O mankind worship Me...”. In such uses, Allah underlines His Lordship, and other attributes. Also, When the pronoun “I” is used, this puts an emphasis on the person of Himself. Sometimes He uses the pronoun “We”: This is a use of “Royal we” or “Majestic plural” for singular person to give the meaning of grandness; such a use exists in some other languages besides Arabic. This is also used where His creation such as angels or human beings are apparently active in certain acts as His servants.

Allah is neither male, nor female. He does not have any gender. So the use of “He” for Allah should be considered as a special use which denotes specially Allah and does not reflect gender.

⁹In our quotations from the Quran, square brackets - [] - are used to indicate details apparently included in the meanings of the original words of the Quran. Such details in square brackets are not reflected in additional words in the original text of Quran as the present words in the original text already give those meanings. These brackets are also used to give details that exist in the previous or following verses which are not quoted. The words in parenthesis - () - in the quotations are mostly explanatory for those who have little knowledge about the text of the Quran.

And reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth,
[saying],
“Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly”
(Quran: 3/190-191)

We have made the Quran easy to understand,
So is there anyone who will mind?
(Quran: 54/40)

2.2 ISLAM IS BASED ON LOVING ALLAH AND BEING CAREFUL OF HIM

He¹⁰ loves them and they love Him.
(Quran: 5/54)

Say, [O Muhammad], “If you love Allah, then follow
me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins.
And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful¹¹.”
(Quran: 3/31)

And [yet], among the people are those who take other
than Allah as equals [to Him]. They love them as they
[should] love Allah. But those who believe are stronger
in love for Allah.
(Quran: 2/165)

The believer in Islam is ready to give his life for Allah.

¹⁰ Allah

¹¹ If we sincerely love Allah, we try to improve ourselves
according to the values that Allah loves.

He¹² has a beloved one who never betrays, who is one, who is always with him, who does not break His promise, who is Beneficent, Merciful, All-Powerful, Near, who does not need anything, who is the Creator of everything, who shaped him when he was in the womb of his mother.

In this world there is no one loved more than Allah. And the love for Allah is exercised in Islam to a great extent. A Muslim prays 5 times a day, gives his wealth for Allah, gives up eating and drinking for Allah when fasting, tries to do good and refrain from doing evil, in order to get the pleasure of Allah. In this way the love for Allah is felt strongly by a Muslim¹³. Let us listen to Allah:

Say, “Indeed, my prayer, my rites of sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allah, Lord of the worlds¹⁴.”

(Quran: 6/162)

And on the other hand, the first person to be careful of is Allah: The Lord who knows all, and who is able to do whatever He wills.

Some of the relevant verses from the Quran are as follows:

Be careful of (your duty to) Allah,
And know that you shall be gathered together to Him.
(Quran: 2/203)

¹² To avoid the repetitions of he/she, him/her, himself/herself we mostly use he, him or himself. Please note that in our usage these are intended to refer to a human being not to males.

¹³ Muslim means a person who practices Islam, a person who submits to Allah.

¹⁴ Or more literally “universes”

And when it is said to him, “Be careful of (your duty to) Allah”, he is led by arrogance to (more) crime. So enough for him is Hell, and worst indeed is that place to rest!

(Quran: 2/206)

Being careful of Allah is for important reasons. Some of the reasons mentioned in the Quran are as follows:

Be careful of (your duty to) Allah then, that you may give thanks.

(Quran: 3/123)

And be careful of (your duty to) Allah; surely Allah is swift in reckoning.

(Quran: 5/4)

To be careful¹⁵ of Allah is especially most important in this life, and once we are successful His love is forever. Allah lets us know a scene in the hereafter¹⁶ where a Muslim states his feelings:

They will say, “Indeed, we were previously among our people fearful (of displeasing Allah).

So Allah conferred favor upon us and protected us from the punishment of the Scorching Fire.

Indeed, we used to supplicate Him before.

Indeed, it is He who is the Beneficent, the Merciful.”

(Quran: 52/26-28)

And as His love and dislike depend on how we are, they

¹⁵ Mentioned as “Taqwa” in the original text which means to protect, to guard, to be careful of.

¹⁶ Or afterlife -we prefer using the word hereafter as it is the real and permanent life as a continuation of the present life-

create deep feelings of accountability and responsibility.

So, a Muslim seeks refuge from Him in Him. The relevant messages of the messengers have been as follows as related in the Quran:

“So flee to Allah.

Indeed, I am to you from Him a clear warner.

And do not make [as equal] with Allah another deity.

Indeed, I am to you from Him a clear warner.”

(Quran: 51/50-51)

2.3 ISLAM IS COMPREHENSIVE

And We have sent down to you the Book as clarification for all things and as guidance and mercy and good tidings for the Muslims.

(Quran: 16/89)

As Allah is the All-Knower, He has given us a guidance that guides us in all relevant and most important matters so that we may be successful. This guidance gives us explanations about everything from a high level perspective.

Islam covers all aspects of a human being: Our social life, our private life, our business life, our prayers, our way of thinking, what to do, how to be, the science, our past, our future, our success indicators, ethical standards, spiritual development, our goals, our body, our spirit, our universe, this life, the hereafter... It promotes human beings, wealth, health, mind, the poor, the rich, the economics, the nations, the neighbors, the relatives, the men, the women, the children, the families...

2.4 ISLAM IS UNIVERSAL

Say, [O Muhammad], “O mankind, indeed I am the Messenger of Allah to you all, from Him to whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. There is no deity except Him; He gives life and causes death.” So believe in Allah and His Messenger, the unlettered prophet, who believes in Allah and His words, and follow him that you may be guided.
(Quran: 7/158)

Islam in relation to mankind, started with the first man. And Islam was the message of Allah to mankind through all of His messengers. For example, in the following verse Allah relates us the religion of Abraham and his recommendation to his children about being Muslim:

And Abraham instructed his sons [to do the same] and [so did] Jacob, [saying]:
“O my sons, indeed Allah has chosen for you this religion, so do not die except while you are Muslims.”
(Quran: 2/132)

Islam is not limited to any nation, person, period or geographical location.

Islam is the religion of all the messengers of Allah, and Islam is the essence of their messages. According to one saying¹⁷ of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him), there

¹⁷ Sayings of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) are a group of hadith. Hadith mainly consist of his sayings, actions-behaviors, and nonverbal approvals/statements about others' actions. These are the secondary sources of Islam. They are studied a lot by scholars and classified in some groups regarding their

have been 124.000 prophets¹⁸ by whom Allah gave His messages to mankind¹⁹. Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus (Peace be upon them) were just some of them. To believe in the messengers of Allah is one of the requirements of Islam. For example, a person who denies Moses or Jesus-Christ (Peace be upon them) as messengers of Allah is not considered a Muslim.

All of the messengers gave the same message: “Believe in the One True God and do good works.” This is the essence of the universal message of Islam.

Even in the name “Islam” we can see its universality: Islam is not named after the name of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him), but religions are mostly named after the most important human beings for each religion. Islam is named with a name that has the meanings of the universal concept of Peace, and submission to Allah.

Additionally as we see in the following verse, Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) was assigned as a messenger to all:

And We have not sent you²⁰ except as a mercy to the worlds.
(Quran: 21/107)

reliability as certain -related and confirmed by many channels-hadith, weak hadith...

¹⁸ This is the number of the prophets by which we mean anbiya (plural for nebiyy). These are persons who informed the messages of Allah with or without any written books. In our usage the word messenger is used for such prophets. The word “rasool” in the Quran means persons who related a book from Allah; they are also messengers.

¹⁹ Musnad, Ahmad Bin Hanbal

²⁰ Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him)

Unlike religions or ideologies based on race, Islam invites and welcomes all kinds of people. According to Islam, all human beings are the offspring of only one man and woman. These contribute a lot to the social richness and openness of Muslims²¹, as they facilitate the entrance of people from all nations into the Islamic community.

2.5 ISLAM IS BASED ON PEACE

As emphasized in the following verse, the good of the human beings is valuable; to work for it will produce positive and long-lasting consequences:

He sends down from the sky, rain, and valleys flow according to their capacity, and the torrent carries a rising foam.

And from that [ore] which they heat in the fire, desiring adornments and utensils, is a foam like it. Thus Allah presents [the example of] truth and falsehood.

As for the foam, it vanishes, [being] cast off; but as for that which benefits the mankind, it remains on the earth.

Thus does Allah present examples.

(Quran: 13/17)

Islam means peace and as we see in the following verse,

²¹ However, the religions or ideologies based on race or ethnicity follow a negative direction and become sharper and sharper in the course of time. This is on one hand because their adherents who really feel warm to others have to leave their racist religions for the more universal religions or ideologies. The other reason for this is that the adherents of more universal ones cannot join and contribute to those racist religions.

Allah invites us to behave justly²² to everyone including the disbelievers²³:

Allah does not forbid you from those who do not fight you because of religion and do not expel you from your homes from dealing kindly with them and acting justly toward them. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly.
(Quran: 60/8)

3 BELIEF ESSENTIALS OF ISLAM

The Messenger²⁴ has believed in what was descended²⁵ to him from his Lord, and [so have] the believers.

All [of them] have believed in Allah and His angels and His books and His messengers, [saying],

“We make no distinction between any of His messengers.”

And they said,

“We heard and we obeyed.

(We seek) Your forgiveness, our Lord, and to You is the (final) destination.”

(Quran: 2/285)

²² For a discussion about Islam and the contemporary issues regarding violence committed in the name of Islam please see part 8.2.

²³ In this book the word “disbeliever” is used for those who ultimately deny the messages of the Creator.

²⁴ Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him)

²⁵ Revealed

3.1 ALLAH -THE ONE REAL GOD-

Indeed, I am Allah.

There is no deity except Me, so worship Me and establish prayer for My remembrance.

(Quran: 20/14)

3.1.1 BELIEF IN GOD AS A GENERAL CONCEPT

3.1.1.1 THE CONCEPT OF BELIEF IN GENERAL

Do not follow the way of those who do not know.

(Quran: 10/89)

Knowledge is critical for success. For example, a driver who wants to go to his destination has to know the way, the meanings of the traffic signs, how to drive... If he knows these, he may go safely to his destination; otherwise, he may enter a wrong way where he may make a big accident where he may even die. As in this simple example, we need to have knowledge in order to reach our goals.

Hence, we try to get necessary knowledge. And since we are child, we also generally try to find out where we come from, what is the purpose of life, are we responsible for what we do in this life, is this the only life or is the death the end, and so on. Based on our observations, our reasoning, the other sources of knowledge we form a set of beliefs. Whether theist or atheist or agnostic and so on, each human being has such a set of beliefs.

When we sit on a chair, we do not say “I believe I sit on a chair”, since we directly experience it. But, our conclusions and beliefs about the above questions contain

elements beyond our direct experiences as well. Though we can reach sound conclusions about the above questions, there is a possibility of mixing our emotions, wishes in the formation of these conclusions. And in order to reach correct conclusions, we may need to spend efforts, and it is possible that not everybody spends same amount of efforts. Hence, there are variations in the sets of beliefs people reach. So, we call them beliefs rather than limited direct knowledge.

Our knowledge is limited in all dimensions²⁶. We have no knowledge beyond certain limits regarding the past, the future, the micro, and macro levels, about the nature of things, internal and external relationships between things²⁷. For example, we do not know the future; but yet we claim that if we let an apple tomorrow it will fall down. Again, we do not know what is under a certain subatomic level; nevertheless, we define the features of an atom, and believe in that definition²⁸. But in fact, for example, if we do not know “all” subatomic levels, this means that we do not have a sure knowledge about the atoms; our knowledge about the atoms has a nature of a belief²⁹; so, our knowledge about everything has such a basic restriction. Therefore, it is important to allocate enough resources in order to reach correct beliefs about the above questions.

²⁶ Therefore we can consider the available knowledge for us as signs for us, and we have to interpret them correctly in order to have a correct understanding about the truth. Wrong conclusions may lead us to failure and personal disaster.

²⁷ The word “things” we mean all entities and events. Naturally this does not include Allah.

²⁸ There is nothing wrong in acting based on this definition for practical purposes in our worldly affairs, because they are useful in stating “how” what we observe is.

²⁹ Here we essentially mean the “knowledge” dimension of the word belief. This word contains the meaning of “trust” as well.

Furthermore, we are a part of this universe. So, in any case our knowledge is partial.

So, the need to have maximum relevant knowledge and the limitations of knowledge force every person to form a belief profile about all the things that may have any influence upon him.

The things that influence us do not consist only of things that we can fully encompass or see. There may be also unseen things that may influence us as the visible³⁰ as emphasized in the following verses:

So I swear by what you see
And what you do not see
(Quran: 69/38-39)

And the visible and the unseen³¹ are not isolated from one another.

Also, as we do not know fully everything, for all human beings including atheists, our knowledge about what we see is naturally related to our beliefs about the unseen.

And as emphasized in the following verses the satisfaction only with the present knowledge about the visible, the arrogant denial of the unseen may lead to error:

Rather, they have denied
That which they encompass not in knowledge
And whose interpretation has not yet come to them.
(Quran: 10/39)

³⁰ In this context by the concept “visible” we mean things that we see and that are comparable with what we see.

³¹ In this context by the concept “unseen” we mean things that are not comparable with what we see.

And they have thereof no knowledge. They follow not except assumption, and indeed, assumption avails not against the truth at all.
(Quran: 53/28)

And when their messengers brought them clear proofs they exulted in the knowledge they (themselves) possessed.
(Quran: 40/83)

Thus forming a strong belief profile correctly is one of the biggest challenges that every human being faces³².

So, because of our limitations of knowledge and because of the apparent need to have an idea about the invisible people have different belief profiles: Among those there are some who care very little about the unseen and believe in and enjoy the visible as it is. There are some who do not hope having knowledge about the unseen. There are some who claim to be able to know even the nature of the unseen for example as being non-existent. There are those who adopt the past or contemporary belief profiles without any personal judgment. There are those who owe everything to physical forces, laws, and relationships... There are those who owe all to certain human beings...

The methodology of Islam is to acknowledge our limitations of knowledge about the unseen and then to make deductions about the unseen based on the visible, instead of denying the unseen. In Islam the impossibility that some guidance from the unseen may reach us is rejected. And the

³² Everybody acknowledges the importance of knowledge, learning and searching about what we do not know. This is why numerous sciences continually try to find out bits of what is unknown.

assistance of the guidance from the Truth is accepted³³.

Logically as the truth is independent from us, any one of these approaches is not in the same level of trueness when compared with the others.

The main groups of belief and their methodologies relevant in our context will be explained and compared with the methodology of Islam in the following parts.

3.1.1.2 ISLAM AND THE OTHER MAIN APPROACHES REGARDING GOD

In this part, we will discuss some aspects of some approaches regarding god. We will give just a preliminary information for a better understanding of the concept of god in Islam. In a later part we will explain the very belief in Allah; and the arguments regarding Allah will help for a better understanding of the other approaches from an Islamic point of view.

3.1.1.2.1 ISLAM AND THE ATHEIST APPROACH

Indeed, those you call upon besides Allah are servants like you. So call upon them and let them respond to you, if you should be truthful.

Have they feet with which they walk, or have they hands with which they hold, or have they eyes with which they see, or have they ears with which they hear?

³³ On the other hand, as in Islam the truth occupies the central place acting in harmony with it is very important. Our actions in harmony with the truth are called good works, and performing them is required.

Say: Call your associates, then make a struggle (to prevail) against me and give me no respite.
(Quran: 7/194-195)

In atheism generally certain relationships and forces are determined based on the observations of the behaviors of the matter. And then these relationships and forces are considered as the causes of what happens so as to replace the One Creator and Sustainer.

For example droplets of rain fall down together. In atheism, the fall of the droplets according to a certain pattern lead to a relationship called gravitation, and then the rain is believed to fall because of gravitation³⁴. This relationship is believed to be absolute in that there is no one who can change it.

However, according to Islam, the behavior of the matter cannot lead us to the discovery of one-to-one, multiple and absolute forces or relationships which will be defined as the real causes of that behavior. Because such thinking would be only an incorrect and circular reasoning in that the relationship that is defined entirely as the consequence of the observed entities would be believed to be the cause of this observation. This is also because the elements of what we observe do not have eyes, ears, minds, goals, and a permanent central power among themselves so that they can act in

³⁴ Some might criticize gravitation for not being a good example arguing that it is one of the unexplained things. However, none of the fundamental facts have been explained, including space, time, life... The things considered as explained seem to be always explained by some people based on many unexplained and passive fundamentals.

harmony³⁵. Therefore the elements of what we observe are not self-defined and they need one self-sufficient and absolute identifier³⁶.

In Islam the behavior that we observe and a true gravitation relationship³⁷ are the consequences of the independent definition and design of Allah who is one. Therefore by observing this behavior we discover how an object behaves and we can predict that it will behave in a certain way to the extent of the correctness of our observation and relevant conclusions. This prediction and calculation is possible because the one who makes this event possible now, in the past or in the future is the same. The one who governs it in each point is the same. Allah has full control over the droplets³⁸ in direct and indirect ways.

This analogy applies to all material causes and effects

³⁵ They have within their level infinite number of elements which need to be in harmony and they have among them no central organizing power.

³⁶ An alternative would be to believe in a huge coincidence for this harmony. Naturally preferring such a coincidence as an explanation instead of a central power requires a very subjective and biased attitude against this central power. Coincidence requires much more conditions as an explanation for this harmony when compared to a central power. Imagine a person who believes that his laptop formed by a coincidence instead of an electronics company. In the following parts there will be additional analysis about coincidence.

³⁷ As our definition of gravitation changes through time, we use the statement “true gravitation” which reflects this relationship and its elements as established, executed and known by the Creator. This may be totally different in the future from our present understanding. This relationship does not have a separate, absolute and self-sufficient existence.

³⁸ We use the word droplet as including all related entities as the atoms, and the word gravitation as to include other physical relationships as space-time curvature...

before that relationship³⁹, the effects that issue because of the droplets⁴⁰ and their very features⁴¹.

Allah gave things common and different features so that there is harmony, predictability, consistency, beauty within things. He might have chosen to create things that are not related at all, that are impossible to understand, that do not have common/comparable framework, space-time, or common features⁴²...

So when an absolute and exclusive self-existence of gravitation is denied, then there needs to be one power that defines and creates it, its causes and effects⁴³.

Also in atheism; anything that cannot be justified directly by our past/present experiences through our sensations is rejected. Therefore there is no personal power above the human beings or above the beings that we directly see. This assertion requires a full knowledge about the unseen.

Again in atheism the visible is seen as self-sufficient: As everything visible forms a whole in them they do not need any support from the unseen. Things may exist, sustain themselves, move, act in harmony even though they do not have the abilities to think, to plan, to see, to hear... This assertion requires a full knowledge about the visible.

However, in Islam it is only Allah who is the All-

³⁹ Such as gravitons or space-time curvature

⁴⁰ Such as their interaction with the atmosphere or their impact on the earth

⁴¹ Such as the space they occupy, their relationship with time, their masses

⁴² Even if Allah had created such a place, probably it would not be appropriate for our living.

⁴³ Evolution, weak or strong nuclear forces, singularity are some of the concepts similar to the gravitation in the above context.

Knower as we see in the following⁴⁴:

Indeed, those who dispute concerning the signs of
Allah without [any] authority having come to them
There is not within their breasts except pride,
[the extent of] which they cannot reach.
So seek refuge in Allah.
Indeed, it is He who is the All-hearing, the All-seeing⁴⁵.
(Quran: 40/56)

Another example about the concepts with which god is replaced in atheism is coincidence: Some things happen or exist because of coincidence. For example as there are billions of galaxies, systems like the solar system may exist by coincidence; and in some of such planetary systems it is probable that planets like ours' exist; and in some of the planets like ours', it is probable that living conditions exist; and in some of such planets it is probable that living forms exist; ...

This is based on the following assumptions: Simpler things coming together may form complicate things; there is a level of things where the things are fully simple, at that level they require no conditions and they are self-sustainable, self-sufficient. And as we see in the following verse, this assumption is not acceptable, as Allah is not the god of only complicate things:

He is the Lord of all things.

⁴⁴Please consider such references to the verses of the Quran, essentially as indications, not as proofs in themselves.

⁴⁵ The seeing and hearing capacities of Allah are different than ours and incomparable. For example our hearing is very limited in that it depends on waves and we can hear only certain frequencies.

(Quran: 6/164)

Things at any levels need the creating and sustaining power of Allah. Therefore, things at a certain level may never be fully explained with things that are at “any” lower level or with things in any earlier stage, because things at any level need certain conditions, and things at the lower levels are effective in any case. For example, the existence of animals cannot be fully explained by evolution and molecules, because none of the molecules, the atoms, the DNAs... is self-sufficient⁴⁶.

Similarly, the amounts of atoms, molecules, chemical or biological events do not increase the ultimate probability of the appearance of any living creature. As seen in the following verse, the creation of the heavens and the earth is not something less complex than the creation of human beings or other life forms:

The creation of the heavens and earth is greater than the creation of mankind, but most of mankind do not know.
(Quran: 40/57)

Also while using coincidence and probabilities, the multitude of things should be taken into account as a limiting factor as well: If one says: the more the number of galaxies, the more the existence probabilities of planetary systems like ours'; this may be only partially true. As a whole, the

⁴⁶ On the other hand, a process at a higher level does not have a special, separate, and independent existence totally outside its lower processes. Let us explain this with a simple mathematical example: Let $x=a+b$; $y=c+d$; $z=e+f$. Then, the equation $x+y=z$ will not have a separate existence outside the equation $(a+b)+(c+d)=(e+f)$. Thus explaining things at a certain level is always fundamentally deficient unless all sub-levels are explained.

multitude of the galaxies in one way may increase the existence probabilities of planetary systems like ours; however, the bigger the multitude of the galaxies, the bigger the need for a multitude of conditions. In other words, while the addition of each atom increases the existence probability of a planetary system, it reduces the probability for the existence of the total amount of atoms⁴⁷ including this additional atom.

3.1.1.2.2 ISLAM AND THE AGNOSTIC APPROACH

Agnostic belief and methodology is based on the acknowledgement that as human beings we cannot encompass the truth and the god beyond our past/present experiences that relate to our sensations as seeing, touching... According to

⁴⁷ Let us give a very simplified mathematical example for the reader who is interested in mathematics: Let $1/x$ be the probability of the existence of a planetary system when there is only 1 unit amount of mass in the universe under other conditions reflected by x . Then if there is m amount of mass in the universe, the probability of the existence of a planetary system will be $1-(1-1/x)^m$. So if m is bigger, then the probability of the existence of a planetary system is higher. However, now let us consider also the probability of the existence of m amount of mass: If $1/y$ is the probability of the existence of 1 unit of mass, then the probability of the existence of m amount of mass will be $1/y^m$. So if we integrate this into the first equation, then the probability of the existence of a planetary system will be: $(1/y^m) * (1-(1-1/x)^m) = 1/y^m$ (even assuming that $1-(1-1/x)^m$ will be 1 for very high values of m relatively to x). So, an increase of the mass or other similar things in the universe does not increase the ultimate probability of the existence of a planetary system. So, as seen in the above example, the multitude of things does not increase the total ultimate probabilities in any way. And it does not help coincidence.

this approach there is the possibility of the existence of what is beyond the visible, but as human beings we do not have the capacity to know it. So, we cannot know whether there is any personal power above the human beings and above what we see.

The approaches of Islam and agnosticism share the fact that human beings have limitations in terms of the knowledge relating to the unseen.

However, Islam is fundamentally different from the agnosticism in two respects:

Firstly, above all there is the One Creator who creates the creation; so there is a functional relationship between the Creator and the creation; therefore based on the visible, we can make some conclusions about the unseen and about the Creator.

Secondly, as seen in the exception part of the below verse, this Creator has the power to share with the human beings some knowledge which is relevant for them. This is clarified in the following verse:

And they encompass not a thing of His knowledge
Except for what He wills.
(Quran: 2/255)

3.1.1.2.3 ISLAM AND BELIEFS LARGELY BASED ON COMMUNICATION

And when it is said to them, “Follow what Allah has revealed,”

They say, “Rather, we will follow that which we found our fathers practicing.”

Even though their fathers understood nothing, nor were they guided?

(Quran: 2/170)

Beliefs mainly based on communication are to a great extent based on accepting the contents of past communications, holy books or traditions without extensively taking into account the logical deductions from the visible.

In Islam the spoken and written communication of the Creator is a reminder and it contains a methodology of thinking. An original message of the Creator is the universe; observation and judgment are critical. And each person is individually responsible for spending efforts in order to find out about the truth. Also he is invited to filter with his logic the communication coming to him from his contemporaries and his ancestors. The following verses refer to this fact:

And recite to them the news of Abraham,
When he said to his father and his people, what do you worship?

They said, we worship idols and remain to them devoted.

He said, do they hear you when you supplicate?
Or do they benefit you, or do they harm?

They said, but we found our fathers doing thus.
(Quran: 26/69-74)

And every one of them will come to Him individually
on the Day of Resurrection.
(Quran: 19/95)

Say, "O People of the Scripture⁴⁸, come to a word that is equitable between us and you that we will not

⁴⁸ Essentially Jews and Christians

worship except Allah and not associate anything with Him and not take one another as lords instead of Allah.”

But if they turn away, then say, “Bear witness that we are Muslims [submitting to Him].”

(Quran: 3/64)

One group of the beliefs that are mainly based on communication is polytheism. The polytheist fills the vacuum of knowledge by assigning powers to what he/she observes. These powers assigned explicitly or implicitly may be like seeing, hearing, self-sustaining, self-organizing, communicating...

Almost all religions other than Islam including atheism, agnosticism, pantheism, and so on share such common grounds with polytheism. For example in polytheism certain powers are assigned to the idols the human beings made, or to the sun, moon and even to certain human beings that are identified as gods by human beings. Similarly, in atheism certain powers are assigned to the matter, objects or entities by human beings. And an atheist approach makes generalizations: when an experiment is done, its consequences are generalized universally, and the entity used in that experiment is given certain attributes. Certain relationships are named. And then there is an object that has certain powers. If another experiment changes the previous findings under certain circumstances, then the powers or attributes are redefined. However, all elements of a defined relationship or law need the unity and power of Allah. As all of the parts in equation as speed, energy, time, distance, mass need Allah, some of them cannot make the others happen.

In the above approaches, what is invented and known to a certain extent is extended to what is unknown, as noted in the following:

“You do not serve besides Him but names which you have named, you and your fathers.”
(Quran: 12/40)

A quote of Allah from a believer is relevant in this respect:

“Here are our people setting up gods beside Him. If only they could provide any proof to support their stand! Who is more evil than the one who fabricates lies and attributes them to Allah?”
(Quran: 18/15)

This approach is pleasant for a human being as it requires the rejection of any personal power above the human being or above what the human being can manage. This approach does not require submitting to a personal power higher than the human being. It requires adoring things that human beings have made, such as idols/statutes with eyes, ears made by human beings or forces and relationships defined by human beings... This approach states that physical entities at the level of a human being are able to make this universe exist. However, this approach cannot have any proof that supports itself as it is very partial, subjective and its conclusions are subject to change.

In the following verse we see a reference to the motivation underlying such approaches:

Have you seen the one who takes as his god his own desire? Then would you be responsible for him?
(Quran: 25/43)

3.1.1.3 EVERYONE BELIEVES IN ONE OR MORE GODS, OR IN THINGS THAT CORRESPOND TO THE CONCEPT OF GOD

Each party rejoices in that which is with itself.
(Quran: 23/53)

One of the definitions of the concept of god may be “the cause of all” as we can partially conclude from the following verses:

Say: “All is from Allah.”
(Quran: 4/78)

That is Allah, your Lord;
There is no deity except Him,
The Creator of all things.
(Quran: 6/102)

Everyone believes in certain explanations for whatever he observes. In other words, except for the unconscious, everyone believes in certain thing(s) that corresponds to god. The highest level of each individual’s explanations for all he observes corresponds to the concept of god⁴⁹ in Islam. For example, a certain Christian may believe that Jesus-Christ (Peace be upon him) is he from whom everything comes; so for this Christian Jesus-Christ corresponds to god. For example, an atheist may believe that the physical forces and relationships are things because of which everything happens; so for this atheist these physical forces and relationships correspond to the concept of god. Naturally all of these cannot

⁴⁹ Here the concept of god is used as a very general concept that includes both the true god and false gods.

be true at the same time, because they are different.

So, based on the above definition that god is the cause of all, the discussion should not be on whether God exists or not⁵⁰. Rather it should be on who the Real God is, and who the real cause of all is. Is the Real God a group of related or unrelated physical laws and forces, god of sun or god of moon, a human being... or is He someone who is knower, creator, powerful, self-sufficient and incomparable with anything?

3.1.2 THERE IS NO GOD BUT ALLAH: THIS UNIVERSE AND ITS PARTS ARE NOT ABSOLUTE, THERE IS ONLY ONE ABSOLUTE POWER

So, know that:
There is no god but Allah.
(Quran: 47/19)

Serve Allah, and join not any partners with Him.
(Quran: 4/36)

And [mention, O Muhammad], when Luqman said to his son while he was instructing him, “O my son, do not associate [anything] with Allah. Indeed, association [with him] is great injustice⁵¹.”

⁵⁰ In fact every conscious person acts as if he believes in god. For example people eat, drink, and work... as if they trust in something that will make them live the next hour. People expect the sun rise the next day... People try to understand their surroundings as if there is some superior power relating things to each other...

⁵¹ Associating partners of any kind with Allah is the biggest sin, because this is the biggest injustice both against Allah and against oneself. And this may reduce the value of a person's good

(Quran: 31/13)

Allah forgives not that a partner should be ascribed unto Him⁵².

He forgives (all) save that to whom He will.

Whoso ascribes partners to Allah, he has indeed invented a tremendous sin.

(Quran: 4/48)

As partially explained above, multiple gods in the form of idols, or sun or moon, or gods in the forms of physical forces or relationships do not have any basis and are strongly rejected in Islam. Human beings or other parts of this universe are not parts, representatives, forms, and versions of Allah.

Then if we reject the false gods, we will be together with the true God as in the experience of Abraham (Peace be upon him):

And thus did We show Abraham the realm of the heavens and the earth that he would be among the certain [in faith].

So when the night covered him [with darkness], he saw a star. He said, "This is my lord." But when it set, he said, "I like not those that disappear."

And when he saw the moon rising, he said, "This is my lord." But when it set, he said, "Unless my Lord guides me, I will surely be among the people gone astray."

deeds. When one commits this sin, he rejects the giver of billions of favors, he rejects the truth, and he rejects all hope and opportunity to thank. Again such a person invents an intermediary between himself and his Creator and he rejects the opportunity to contact Him directly.

⁵² If there is no repentance.

And when he saw the sun rising, he said, “This is my lord; this is greater.” But when it set, he said, “O my people, indeed I am free from what you associate with Allah.

Indeed, I have turned my face toward He who created the heavens and the earth, inclining toward truth, and I am not of those who associate others with Allah.”
(Quran: 6/75-79)

Deep inside everyone there is or was the faith in Allah: At a certain stage while we had not invented false gods Allah has brought our souls into existence, questioned us and we have all witnessed to Him being our Lord. This is explained in the following verse:

And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam from their backs their descendants and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them], “Am I not your Lord?” They said, “Yes, we have testified.” [This] lest you should say on the day of Resurrection, “Indeed, we were of this unaware.”
(Quran: 7/172)

3.1.3 THE METHODOLOGY TO UNDERSTAND WHO ALLAH IS AND SOME KEY FACTS RELATING TO HIM THAT WE OBSERVE IN OUR UNIVERSE

Say:

“This is my way.

I call to Allah with sure knowledge,

I and whoever follows after me.”

(Quran: 12/108)

3.1.3.1 GENERAL METHODOLOGY

In Islam the methodology to understand Allah starts with the feelings of thankfulness, carefulness, observation of the universe and reasoning.

Almost every person who is thankful and careful would ask these questions: Where all the favors we experience come from? Where the painful things come from? Why I was born? Why do I live? Almost every logical person would ask: Why what we observe is the way it is?

Then we would allocate some effort to observing and reasoning on what we observe.

Then as a product gives us an idea about its producer, so this universe also will give us -the believers- an idea about its Creator. For example, when one sees the Sultanahmet Mosque, he will have an idea about its architect, that he has certain abilities about mathematics, beauty, team-building, financing, planning and so on. Like this, the universe that we observe also gives us ideas about its Creator.

The Creator is not for us, we are for the Creator, therefore, He is not according to our expectations; but He is according to Himself and according to the correct conclusions that we may make under His guidance about what we observe objectively in the universe. Allah says as follows:

But if the Truth had followed their desires, the heavens and the earth and whoever is in them would have been ruined.
(Quran: 23/71)

In this respect, in the Quran, Allah makes lots of references to the physical, biological, astronomical facts and events.

Everything in this universe is a sign that shows us the unity, the powers, and certain attributes of Allah.

As nothing other than Allah is neither self-sufficient nor creator, everything is the outcome of the attributes of Allah. Therefore everything shows us certain attributes of Allah⁵³. Below are some examples.

3.1.3.2 EXAMPLES

3.1.3.2.1 MANY SIMILAR THINGS

And it is He Who produces gardens trellised and untrellised, and datepalms, and crops of different shape and taste (its fruits and its seeds) and olives, and pomegranates, similar and dissimilar.
(Quran: 6/141)

In our universe we observe multiple things that are similar or comparable. For example, there are billions of electrons, billions of similar atoms, plants, and animals... For instance the electrons are distinct entities, but they are similar and are subject to the same rules.

And as this universe is mathematical⁵⁴, whether we look into micro or macro levels; or in the past or in the future, we always observe the same situation in everything. Whatever is the scale, we can divide in different dimensions and have parts that are distinct but that are same or comparable.

⁵³ However, as we have limitations in observation and analysis, we have to have some caution regarding some of our conclusions.

⁵⁴ This feature of the universe is also due to the oneness of its Creator and its Sustainer and to His will.

This shows us that the source of all is the same and that all is created and sustained by the same Creator, Designer. Otherwise, we would not be able to observe even two similar electrons.

3.1.3.2.2 THINGS -INCLUDING CAUSALITY- ARE PARTS OF SYSTEMS

Blessed is He in whose hand is dominion, and He is over all things competent

[He] who created death and life to test you as to which of you is best in deed

And He is the Majestic, the Forgiving [and] who created seven heavens in layers.

You do not see in the creation of the Most Merciful any inconsistency.

So return (your) vision (to the sky); do you see any breaks?

Then return (your) vision twice again.

(Your) vision will return to you humbled while it is fatigued.

(Quran: 67/1-4)

Another sign of the unity of the Creator of All is that everything in this universe is part of systems.

An electron in our eye may be part of an atom, of a cell, of our eye, of our head, of our body, of the solar system... or it may be part of other systems.

Our eyes, our ears, the earth, the moon, the sun, a stone, a bird... they are all parts of systems. Whatever sample we take, whatever picture we take we will see that it is part of systems and that it contains systems and parts of systems. Everything is functional in relation to many things.

They all have meanings in terms of functionality and in relation to others. We can see this even within simultaneous things in a photo we take. The causality is also just a part of this whole and just a consequence of the unity above all.

On the other hand, though the parts do not have the power to plan, to organize or to analyze they exist and they act in harmony within and outside themselves.

The things that form systems and act harmoniously show that they are defined by One Creator and that they are under the control of this Creator and Sustainer. Otherwise no system could keep its existence, and we would not be able to do science, to understand anything, to predict, to calculate, to invent...

As we see in the following verses, everything is “subject” to the acts of Allah:

Then do they not look at the camels how they were created?

And at the sky how it was raised?

And at the mountains how they were erected?

And at the earth how it was spread out?

So remind, [O Muhammad]; you are only a reminder.

You are not over them a controller.

(Quran: 88/17-22)

Again, as we see in the following verses, our hearing capacity, eyes, hearts, and the earth; they are all for a reason; and in this sense they are under one unity:

And it is He who produced for you hearing and vision and hearts; little are you grateful. And it is He who has multiplied you throughout the earth, and to Him you will be gathered.

(Quran: 23/78-79)

Likewise, all creatures exist for many reasons, and they are similar to us in certain aspects as stated in the following verse:

And there is no creature on [or within] the earth or bird that flies with its wings except that they are communities like you.
(Quran: 6/38)

And as we notice in the following verse, everything exalts Him, and everything is the servant of Allah, and they are sustained by Allah:

The seven heavens and the earth and whatever is in them exalt Him. And there is not a thing except that it exalts [Allah] by His praise, but you do not understand their [way of] exalting. Indeed, He is ever Forbearing and Forgiving.
(Quran: 17/44)

3.1.3.2.3 THE SEQUENTIAL UNITY

And it is He who sends the winds as good tidings before His mercy, and We send down from the sky pure water that We may bring to life thereby a dead land and give it as drink to those We created of numerous livestock and men.
(Quran: 25/48-49)

Our ability to relate things to others within the dimension of time also shows us the unity above all: The rain drops, then the seeds split, then the plants grow, and then the animals eat the plants... The sequential harmonious events show the One Power above all. Everything has a direction, has

a goal.

When it rains, Allah has already goals in the rain. But according to the disbelieving approach, the rain is just an isolated physical event; when it rains, nobody has any goal to produce by making to rain.

However, real life is not like a movie illusion. In a movie we feel for example that we see a flying bird, although there are just static pictures that come one after another at a certain speed. If we zoom in to the descent of the rain in real terms of time, to the minutest detail, we cannot reach a real level where there is only a picture. In every level there is a movement, energy, a direction. So, in fact, if we zoom in within the dimension of time, we always see that the causes and the outcomes are together. At no level we will be able to see only the outcomes, or only the causes. Therefore, the causes cannot be considered as isolated from the outcomes⁵⁵; and they cannot be considered as the ultimate origin of what we observe.

So, the past is based on the future, as the future is based on the past. And all is based on the will of the One Allah as we see in the example in the following verses:

And (We) sent down, from the rain clouds, pouring water; that We may bring forth thereby grain and herbs.
(Quran: 78/14-15)

You will find further details related to the sequential unity in part 3.6 under the heading “Destiny”.

⁵⁵ We cannot explain the present with the past, because the present contains a past in itself, and the past is of the same nature as the past which exists in the present.

3.1.3.3 THINGS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Say,

“O Allah, Owner of Sovereignty, You give sovereignty to whom You will and You take sovereignty away from whom You will.

You honor whom You will and You humble whom You will.

In Your hand is [all] good.

Indeed, You are over all things competent.

You cause the night to enter the day, and You cause the day to enter the night;

And You bring the living out of the dead, and You bring the dead out of the living.

And You give provision to whom You will without account.”

(Quran: 3/26-27)

When we observe the universe, we see that its parts are subject to change. For example there is the death, there is the life; there is the night, there is the day. This is also the situation in subatomic levels, and galactic levels.

And if the parts of a whole are subject to change, then its totality is also subject to change. For example, if I can melt and change the parts of a car, then I can redesign and change the car. Therefore, this universe, including all of its matter, its physical laws, its biological rules and its totality can be designed and created in different forms, structures.

Some people claim that they can explain everything with the physical laws, relationships, and so on; according to them, because of physical laws and so on, this universe is what had to be; therefore there is no need for any god.

According to the Quran however, only Allah is

absolute and anything else is subject to His Will. And as underlined in the above quote from the Quran along with the concept of change, He is Able to do whatever He wills. Nothing that we observe in our universe including the physical rules, relationships is absolute. Allah may create or may have created universes where physical rules, relationships are different. So no such physical rules or relationships can be used to ultimately explain why what we observe happens. And therefore, this entire universe is not a structure that had to be.

In the Quran there are examples which show that nothing is absolute except Allah. The following is one of them:

(Allah said:)

“And what is that in your right hand, O Moses?”

He said,

“It is my staff; I lean upon it, and I bring down leaves for my sheep, and I have therein other uses.”

[Allah] said; “Throw it down, O Moses.”

So he threw it down, and thereupon it was a snake, moving swiftly.

[Allah] said, “Seize it and fear not;

We will return it to its former state.”

(Quran: 20/17-21)

If by a physical rule I explain something in Turkey but not in Germany, then this rule is not a fully valid physical rule in fact. Likewise, if by a rule I explain something only in this universe but nothing outside this universe, this rule is not an absolute rule.

This universe itself is a specially designed universe. This universe is just a choice of Allah. It is not the entire and absolute truth.

So if different kinds of universes may exist, the present scientific explanations are always local explanations. And they are not absolute. If we take them as absolute, this approach will not be scientific and it will artificially limit our knowledge potential.

Any knowledge related to science depends on our observations. If our observations were different, our scientific knowledge would be different as well. For example, the science claims to explain why the pen goes downwards when I let it. However, if it goes upwards when I let it, the science would claim to explain it again. Our scientific knowledge is reactive in nature. So it does not explain why things are the way they are, but it explains to a certain extent how things happen.

According to Islam, Allah gives His creatures their features and makes them happen. So, the physical, biological... rules are necessary for practical reasons and they increase the greatness of the art of Allah, the beauty and harmony in what we observe. We need these rules and features to understand “how” things happen, so that we can use them, so that we can invent machines, so that we can solve problems... But they are not absolute. Those are partial explanations of the experienced events.

According to Islam, the ultimate cause of what we observe and what we do not observe is the One Creator and the One Sustainer. Therefore to consider as absolute certain relationships which can be designed differently and to owe to them what we observe is not acceptable.

So, if this universe is just one of the alternatives, then only the One who has chosen the present alternative is absolute, and so “there is no god” “except Allah” who has the overall power over each thing.

3.1.3.4 THINGS ARE PASSIVE -IN RELATION TO THE CREATING POWER OF ALLAH-

Do not prostrate to the sun or to the moon,
but prostrate to Allah, who created them.
(Quran: 41/37)

Do they have feet by which they walk?
Or do they have hands by which they strike?
Or do they have eyes by which they see?
Or do they have ears by which they hear?
Say, [O Muhammad],
“Call your ‘partners’ and then conspire against me and
give me no respite.”
(Quran: 7/195)

Each thing has an existence due to the will, power and knowledge of Allah. The elements of a thing and the systems that contain this thing also have such an existence due to the will, power and knowledge of Allah. This relationship between Allah and anything is unique. There is no similar relationship among things other than Allah. This is in parallel with the fundamental fact of Islam stated in the following verse:

There is no god but Allah.
(Quran: 3/62)

Consequently no object we observe is self-sufficient or absolute. When I say “This table is small”, even the feature of smallness does not belong in fact to this table, this feature is not inside this table. The table is small only relatively to something else. The same holds true for the parts of the table as well. This analogy applies for other features of the table as well, including its mass, its energy, its functionality, its

color... This is not only for our understanding but for the very being and for the very attributes of the table.

The table may not have any function over anything else except if it is defined together with other things as part of a well-established coordinate system with all its parts, defined by the same definer.

So, each of the things that we observe, need the unity of the “One” Creator and the “One” Sustainer above them in order to exist and in order to mean anything.

The unity of Allah above all, is concisely explained in the following verses:

Say:

“He is Allah, the One,

Allah is the Self-Sufficient⁵⁶

He neither begets nor is born.

And there is none comparable to Him.”

(Quran: 112/1-4)

As we see in the following verse, everything that exists has its measure in the sight of Allah:

And everything with Him is by (due) measure.

(Quran: 13/8)

Therefore, there is only One God and without His Unity above all, nothing can exist, nothing can mean anything, nothing can have any attributes. There are no other gods simultaneously or consecutively. He is an All-Encompassing God. He is the ultimate and immediate cause of all. He is not a partial cause.

⁵⁶ He is independent of all, He does not need anything; while all are dependent on Him, all need Him.

3.1.3.5 SOME OTHER FACTS THAT SHOW US THE UNITY OF ALLAH ABOVE ALL

And not absent from your Lord is any [part of an] atom's weight within the earth or within the heaven or [anything] smaller than that or greater but that it is in a clear register.

(Quran: 10/61)

Blessed is He in Whose hand is the Sovereignty, and, He is Able to do all things.

(Quran: 67/1)

We can observe other examples which show that there is a unity above each thing and above all. For example, if I drop a pen on the ground, I know that until it reaches the ground, the earth will rotate a certain angle, or a photon on a star will go a certain distance. The photon cannot proceed a millimeter without the pen proceeding a certain distance, and vice versa.

However deep we go in the micro levels, however backwards we go in time, we observe the same situation.

The harmony of space-time and our ability to calculate, to compare, to predict and to enjoy show the unity above all. This harmony although there is multiplicity in this universe, shows that everything is subject to the will and powers of One All-Powerful God.

3.1.4 THE NAMES OF ALLAH

He is Allah, other than whom there is no deity, Knower of the unseen and the witnessed. He is the Beneficent, the Merciful.

He is Allah, other than whom there is no deity, the Sovereign, the Pure, the Peace, the Bestower of Faith, the Overseer, the Majestic, the Compeller, the Superior.

Glory to Allah! (High is He) above whatever they associate with Him.

He is Allah, the Creator, the Initiator, the Designer; to Him belong the most beautiful names.

Whatever is in the heavens and earth is exalting Him. And He is the Majestic, the Wise.

(Quran: 59/22-24)

In the Quran, Allah lets us know many of His attributes. For example, The One, The Creator, The Designer, The Knower, the Beneficent, the Merciful, The Forgiver, The Near, The Truth, The Mighty Doer of What He Wills, ...

His unity is very important in terms of all His attributes. For example a god who is not All-Powerful cannot be Creator. A god who does not have knowledge cannot be the Beneficent... Therefore in Islam there are not different gods who have different attributes. There is a reference to this in the following verse:

Had there been within the heavens and earth gods besides Allah, they⁵⁷ both would have been ruined. So exalted is Allah, Lord of the Throne, above what they describe.

(Quran: 21/22)

And He lets us know also that He is the Incomparable. He does not beget, nor is He begotten. He is neither male, nor female. He is not limited with space or time. So this is why His pictures cannot be drawn, and there are no pictures of

⁵⁷ The heavens and the earth

Allah in the mosques or in any other Islamic places.

Allah is our best friend who is also the source of the biggest love⁵⁸. He is our permanent friend. One of His names is The Friend. He is with us wherever we are. He has full knowledge about us, and He has whole power over us. Allah knows us when we were in the wombs of our mothers, He knows us when we die. He knows our secrets, He knows our weaknesses. He does not need anything from us, but He gives us billions of favors each second. He calls us to His Mercy and Favors. But we are limited in responding to His calls.

Allah is Wise.

Everything comes ultimately from Him. As said in the Quran in chapter 53 verse 43, He is the one who makes to laugh and He is the one who makes to weep⁵⁹. But His Mercy is bigger.

Allah is The Near. He is Nearer to us even than our parents. There is no intermediary between us and Allah. Therefore, there is neither religious hierarchy nor religious class in Islam. For example if the imam who is the person who leads the prayer in mosques is not present, an engineer or a salesman or another person who knows how to pray may lead the prayer. Thus a Muslim prays only and directly to Allah.

⁵⁸ This love and the joy from it are the biggest love and joy for a Muslim. The love for Allah is permanent, continuous, concentrated, effective (in that it produces consequences in good deeds), intense, and supported with logic. As Allah says:

Behold, in the Remembrance of Allah do hearts find satisfaction
(Quran: 13/28).

⁵⁹ About suffering and evil please see part 8.4.

3.2 THE HEREAFTER

Then did you think that We created you uselessly and that to Us you would not be returned?
(Quran: 23/115)

3.2.1 DESCRIPTION

On that Day We shall roll up the heavens like a scroll of writings; just as We originated the first creation, so shall We produce it again.
That is Our promise, and We will fulfill it.
(Quran: 21/104)

[It will be] on the Day the earth will be replaced by another earth,
and the heavens [as well],
and all creatures will come out before Allah, the One, the Prevailing.
And you will see the criminals that Day bound together in shackles,
(Quran: 14/48-49)

Has there [not] come upon man a period of time when he was not a thing [even] mentioned?
Indeed, We created man from a sperm-drop mixture that We may try him; and We made him hearing and seeing.
Indeed, We guided him to the way, be he grateful or be he ungrateful.
Indeed, We have prepared for the disbelievers chains and shackles and a blaze.

Indeed, the righteous will drink from a cup [of wine]
whose mixture is of Kafur,

A spring of which the [righteous] servants of Allah will
drink;

They will make it gush forth in force [and abundance].
They [are those who] fulfill [their] vows and fear a Day
whose evil will be widespread.

And they give food in spite of love for it to the needy,
the orphan, and the captive,
[Saying], "We feed you only for the countenance of
Allah.

We wish not from you reward or gratitude.

Indeed, We fear from our Lord a Day austere and
distressful."

So Allah will protect them from the evil of that Day,

And give them radiance and happiness

And will reward them for what they patiently endured
with a garden [in Paradise] and silk [garments].

[They will be] reclining therein on adorned couches.

They will not see therein any (burning) sun or
[freezing] cold.

And near above them are its shades,

And its clustered fruits to be picked will be lowered in
compliance.

And there will be circulated among them vessels of
silver and goblets of crystal,

And goblets made of crystal-clear silver of which they
have determined the measure.

And they will be given to drink a cup [of wine] whose
mixture is of ginger

[From] a fountain within Paradise named Salsabeel.

There will circulate among them young boys made
eternal.

When you see them, you would think them (as
beautiful as) scattered pearls.

And when you look there [in Paradise], you will see pleasure and great dominion.

Upon the inhabitants will be green garments of fine silk and brocade.

And they will be adorned with bracelets of silver,

And their Lord will give them a purifying drink.

[And it will be said], “Indeed, this is for you a reward, And your effort has been appreciated.”

(Quran: 76/1-22)

Indeed, the criminals will be in the punishment of Hell, abiding eternally.

(The torment) will not be lightened for them, and they will be plunged into destruction with deep regrets, sorrows and in despair therein.

And We did not wrong them, but it was they who were the wrongdoers.

And they will call, “O Malik⁶⁰, let your Lord put an end to us!”

He will say, “Indeed, you will remain.”

“We had certainly brought you the truth, but most of you, to the truth, were averse.”

Or have they devised [some] affair? But indeed, We are devising [a plan].

Or do they think that We hear not their secrets and their private conversations?

Yes, [We do], and Our messengers are with them recording.

(Quran: 43/74-80)

On the Day We will say to Hell, “Have you been filled?” and it will say, “Are there some more,”

⁶⁰ An angel in Hell

And Paradise will be brought near to the righteous, not far,
[It will be said], “This is what you were promised for every returner [to Allah] and keeper [of His covenant] Who feared the Most Merciful unseen and came with a heart returning [in repentance].
Enter it in peace. This is the Day of Eternity.”
They will have whatever they wish therein,
And with Us is more.
(Quran: 50/30-35)

Those will have a share of what they have earned, and Allah is swift in account.
(Quran: 2/202)

One day we will die. And one day there will be the end of the present phase, that is to say our universe will collapse for a new startup, for the final, stable and permanent phase⁶¹. This final phase is called the Hereafter.

The hereafter is a continuation of the present life. It is both physical and spiritual. The ending time of the present phase is not known by anyone other than Allah.

There will be some common and different elements between the present phase and the final phase. Physical, chemical and biological rules will be different to some extent than those experienced in the present phase.

The mixture of the good and bad that we see in the present universe will be removed and they will be distinguished in the next phase. The locations of the good and evil will be different. And the consequences of the good will

⁶¹ Although we use the word phase in reference to the present and the next phase, essentially they should not be considered as parts of the same time frame.

be coupled with the good-doers, and the consequences of the evil will be coupled with the wrongdoers. The first will happen in the part called the paradise or the gardens, and the latter will happen in the part called the hell. Allah knows what other parts will be in the final phase.

As mentioned in the following verse, the rewards of Allah for the good-doers in the hereafter will be much more when compared with the punishment for the evildoers:

Whoever does an evil deed will not be recompensed except by the like thereof; but whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer, those will enter Paradise, being given provision therein without account.
(Quran: 40/40)

3.2.2 SIGNS OF THE HEREAFTER

And whoever desires the reward of this world We will give him thereof;
And whoever desires the reward of the Hereafter We will give him thereof.
And We will reward the grateful.
(Quran: 3/145)

As we see in the above verse, we are invited in this life to make a decision which relates to the hereafter. So to make this decision we have to have a true knowledge about it.

And the hereafter is about the future from a human perspective.

So, to understand it, we can use the general tools we use to predict the future:

In worldly terms, we predict the future by making generalizations. For example, we see that a stone falls again and again when we let it again and again, then we say that it will fall the next time we let it. So, we expect the same event to happen under the same circumstances.

Also, an important concept in our predictions is the concept of “balance”. For example if I bought something worth USD200, this means that I will have to pay in the future USD200 under certain conditions.

Another tool we use to know the future is the information given by the ones who have a competence about the future events. For example we listen to the meteorology experts to know about the future weather conditions, and we plan according to what they say.

As long as we do not experience the hereafter observations, as human beings, we will have to use the above tools to predict the future. Therefore, in parallel with the Quran, our explanations about the hereafter will progress as follows: We will first reach conclusions about the acts of Allah based on our observations in our universe; we will make generalizations relating to them including the concept of balance; and we will confirm these with His words.

When we observe the universe, we see that Allah is Active and He has the ability and the will to recreate. The following verses state these facts:

Is not He, who created the heavens and earth, able to create the like of them? Yes indeed; He is the Creator, the All-knower.
(Quran: 36/81)

As We originated the first creation, so shall We produce it again.

That is Our promise, and We will fulfill it.
(Quran: 21/104)

Whatever we observe in this universe is a sign that shows us an Owner of unlimited powers above all. Our observation gives us a conclusion that this All-Powerful is the source of billions of favors and that He puts His powers into action. And accordingly we may conclude that He is also able to use His powers more extensively.

When we observe the universe, we see that relating to Allah there are two determinants of the recreation: The first of these is the ability of Allah to recreate, and the second is His will to recreate. The second will relate to the existence of certain reasons and goals for Him in recreating.

If “a person” has the “means” and “reasons” to do something and if that person “promises” to do it, if he has integrity then he will do it. In this universe we see clearly that Allah is very strict in performing His actual plan.

So in the following parts we will analyze the means and reasons regarding the hereafter.

3.2.2.1 ALLAH IS ABLE TO RECREATE

Of course Allah who has created and who creates is also able to recreate as we see in the following verses:

Does man think that We will not assemble his bones?
Yes indeed; we are able to reconstruct his fingertips⁶².
(Quran: 75/3-4)

⁶² Thanks to the discoveries in the last centuries, today we know that each person has a unique fingertip pattern.

And as we see in the following verses, the Creator who created us in the first place is naturally able to recreate us:

And they say, “When we are bones and crumbled particles, will we [truly] be resurrected as a new creation?”

Say, “Be you stones or iron; or [any] creation of that which is great within your breasts.” And they will say, “Who will restore us?”

Say, “He who brought you forth the first time.”
(Quran: 17/49-51)

And as we see in the following verse creating one single soul or the whole mankind does not make any difference for Allah in terms of easiness:

Your creation and your resurrection are as but as a single soul.
(Quran: 31/28)

In the past, an argument about the hereafter has been the impossibility of the recreation. But today, this argument does not seem to be very sustainable along with the discoveries in genetics.

As explained above, because of the absolute “unity” of this All-Powerful God, there would be no one who would limit His powers.

So we cannot expect Him to limit Himself to create only one universe with only temporary consequences.

These are all conclusions we can base on our observations of the present universe.

3.2.2.2 ALLAH HAS THE REASONS AND THE WILL TO RECREATE

He creates what He wills.
(Quran: 30/54)

The universe in which we live is just a special structure of universe among an unlimited number of alternatives. There is no fact that obliges us to believe that this is the only possible shape of a universe. If it is not the only shape of a possible universe and if it came into existence then there has been a personal choice for its entire actual state. And as we explained in the above parts, there are enough evidences that show us the One power over it.

If this universe is the consequence of a personal will, then there will be goals for it at the level of the relevant person who is of a higher level than this universe.

On the other hand, although we observe that every part of this universe is for certain goals, and it constitutes a unity in itself, we also see that it is temporary and not self-sufficient. Therefore it is neither entirely self-defining nor entirely complete in itself in terms of goal for its very own existence.

Therefore we may expect a successive stage of somewhat different nature where the personal goals of the higher level will be accomplished.

Having considered above the ability of Allah to recreate, let us now consider to a certain extent the reasons to recreate. In the following we will consider how our observations lead us to understand the hereafter in terms of reasons:

3.2.2.2.1 ALLAH IS WISE: HE ACTS BASED ON REASONS

He is the Omnipotent over His servants,
and He is the Wise, the Knower.
(Quran: 6/18)

O People, if you are in doubt about the Resurrection,
then [consider that] indeed,
We created you from dust, then from a sperm-drop,
then from a clinging clot, and then from a lump of flesh,
formed and unformed that We may show you.

And We settle in the wombs whom We will for a
specified term, then We bring you out as infants, and
then [We develop you] that you may reach your [time
of] maturity.

And among you is he who is taken in early death, and
among you is he who is returned to the most decrepit
[old] age so that he knows, after [once having]
knowledge, nothing.

And you see the earth barren, but when We send down
upon it rain, it quivers and swells and grows
[something] of every beautiful pair.

That is because Allah is the Truth and because He gives
life to the dead and because He is over all things
competent and [that they may know] that the Hour is
coming no doubt about it and that Allah will resurrect
those in the graves.

And of the people is he who disputes about Allah
without knowledge or guidance or an enlightening
book [from Him],
(Quran: 22/5-8)

As we see in the above verses, when we observe the

universe, we see that things happen for certain reasons and toward certain goals. In the above verses, Allah gives the example of the creation of a human being, different things created during this creation, and different stages toward a certain goal. Nothing in these stages is coincidental, nothing is useless. In the very nature of everything Allah has put this feature that everything is at least for one reason, and Allah sustains this feature of everything. Whatever we observe shows us that the Creator and the Sustainer is Wise, and whatever He creates complies with His attributes.

So can we say that in its wholeness this universe does not have a goal?

3.2.2.2.2 THERE ARE REASONS FOR THIS UNIVERSE

Then did you think that We created you uselessly
and that to Us you would not be returned?
(Quran: 23/115)

And We created not the heavens and the earth, and all
that is between them, for mere play,
We did not create them except in truth, but most of
them do not know.
(Quran: 44/38-39)

As everything is for at least one reason, we understand that Allah is wise. Therefore, the creation of this universe in its entirety also must be with a reason.

As an example to clarify this, suppose that you find a pen somewhere. You know that this was made so that it would be used to write. Why? Because, firstly, it was designed in that shape; secondly some material was consumed to make it;

thirdly, the material used for it could be used for another purpose; fourthly, the one who made it knows about making a pen, knows about writing; fifthly, if there was no such a reason, then the effort spent to design and to make it would be just a waste, which is not something reasonable, but the person who is able to make it, should be reasonable.

Like this example, when we observe the universe, we see that with its galaxies, with its planets, with its lives, with its physical laws, with its systems, with the arts in it, with its beauties, it cannot be made uselessly. The same applies for us as well. If we consider our ability to analyze, our ears, eyes... we may conclude that we have not been created just to eat, drink and sleep, and disappear forever.

Therefore as the parts of this universe are temporary, and as it is a huge product, it is apparent that it is created for certain goals. Otherwise it would be a waste.

On the other hand, we do not have any sound reason to claim that the death is the end. The death is just one of the stages. Even when we were earth, or even before that, there was the will of Allah about each of us; therefore we undergo stages. Through death, we return to the earth, but there is no definite evidence that the stages have been completed. And we are informed in the following verses that the stages will continue until the conclusive stage:

You shall certainly travel from stage to stage (in this life and in the Hereafter).
(Quran: 84/19)

Every soul will taste death, and you will only be given your [full] compensation on the Day of Resurrection. So he who is drawn away from the Fire and admitted to Paradise will have succeeded.

And what is the life of this world except the enjoyment of delusion.

(Quran: 3/185)

As we see in the following statement from the Quran this part of life in this temporary world is just for certain reasons, and this stage of life is not the essential part of life:

And he who believed said: “O my people! Follow me, I will guide you to the right course;

O my people! This worldly life is only the means (to an end),

But the hereafter will be the abode of stability.”

(Quran: 40/ 38-39)

Some of the reasons are as follows:

3.2.2.2.2.1 THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FAVORS OF ALLAH

He (Allah) is the Beneficent, the Merciful.

(Quran: 59/22)

Your Lord is a sovereign doer of what He wills.

(Quran: 11/107)

Know that the life of this world is but amusement and diversion and adornment,

And boasting to one another and competition in increase of wealth and children,

Like the example of a rain whose [resulting] plant growth pleases the tillers;

Then it dries and you see it turned yellow;

Then it becomes [scattered] debris.

And in the Hereafter is severe punishment and forgiveness from Allah and approval.

And what is the worldly life except the enjoyment of delusion.

(Quran: 57/20)

If Allah is Beneficent and Mighty Doer of what He wills, then He may create an environment where He can bestow permanent favors.

Allah the Beneficent tells us that He willed and is able to give permanent favors. The place of these permanent favors is the paradise which is perfect to the extent that Allah wills. In this place, there is no pain, no fear, no enemy, no scarcity of resources and no sorrow. In this place there is happiness and peace⁶³.

Allah has also willed to put there beings who have certain knowledge and powers. He created the human beings with the potentials and the abilities to choose the good or the evil; to do and to know the good as well as the evil as we see in the following verse:

And We said, “O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise and eat therefrom in [ease and] abundance from wherever you will.

But do not approach this tree, lest you be among the wrongdoers.”

(Quran: 2/35)

But also Allah has forbidden the entrance of the bad,

⁶³ Please note that here we explain things in the context of human beings and the hereafter. As mentioned in other parts, every creature in the present world is also the servant of Allah and behaves also in this respect and they experience the favors and Powers of Allah in many dimensions.

arrogant, untruthful, and ungrateful in the paradise. There is a reference to this fact in the following verse:

But the Messiah said:

“Children of Israel, worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. He who associates anything with Allah, Allah has indeed forbidden Paradise to him, and his abode shall be in the Fire.

The wrongdoers shall have no helpers.”

(Quran: 5/72)

Thus, He allows the entrance in this paradise for the human beings who sincerely choose to enter there, who are in harmony with the divine values and who do good deeds. So, the essential and permanent place where His favors will happen is the paradise as explained in the following verses:

For those who do good (deeds) is the goodness and extra.

No darkness will cover their faces, nor humiliation.

Those are companions of Paradise; they will abide therein eternally.

But they who earn evil doings, the recompense of an evil deed is its equivalent, and humiliation will cover them.

They will have from Allah no protector.

It will be as if their faces are covered with pieces of the night so dark [are they].

Those are the companions of the Fire; they will abide therein eternally.

(Quran: 10/26-27)

In the context of the permanent favors of Allah, one of the reasons for which He has created us in this phase in this universe is to give us the opportunity to make our choices as

to the present and final stages. In the following verses He clarifies this:

And whoever desires the reward of this world We will give him thereof;
and whoever desires the reward of the Hereafter We will give him thereof.
And We will reward the grateful.
(Quran: 3/145)

And say, "The truth is from your Lord, so whoever wills let him believe; and whoever wills let him disbelieve."
(Quran: 18/29)

Indeed, We guided him to the way, be he grateful or be he ungrateful.
(Quran: 76/3)

In the context of the permanent favors of Allah, the second reason for which He has created us in this phase is to distinguish with objective criteria the ones who are good from the ones who are evil, the ones who try to obey Allah and comply with the divine values from the ones who do not, the ones who are humble from the ones who are arrogant, and so on. The following verse makes reference to this:

Had Allah willed, He would have made you one nation [united in religion], but [He intended] to test you in what He has given you; so race to [all that is] good. To Allah is your return all together, and He will [then] inform you concerning that over which you used to differ.
(Quran: 5/48)

Consequently, Allah will bestow His permanent favors to those who choose to believe in them and who want them, who benefit from the messages of Allah and who choose to comply with the divine values.

These are all the natural consequences of a god who is Beneficent and Active. And in paradise it will be witnessed permanently that Allah is the Beneficent.

3.2.2.2.2 THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TRUTH

Allah is the Truth.
(Quran: 22/6)

That He should prove the truth to be true,
And the false to be false,
Even though the criminals disliked it.
(Quran: 8/8)

“And indeed, we or you are either upon guidance or in clear error.”
(Quran: 34/24)

Indeed, we offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, and they declined to bear it and feared it; but man [undertook to] bear it.
Indeed, he was unjust and ignorant.
[It was] so that Allah may punish the hypocrite men and hypocrite women and the men and women who associate others with Him and that Allah may accept repentance from the believing men and believing women.
And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful.

(Quran: 33/72-73)

So the truth was established, and abolished was what they were doing.

(Quran: 7/118).

Will the truth be hidden or stay in the state of knowledge forever?

There are purposes regarding us. We are part of the scene for the execution of truth.

Allah knows the truth. But the consequences of the truth also would be executed. He created this universe, He created many creatures that taste His powers and His Mercy and He created us. He enabled us to distinguish between the right and wrong, bad and good. And He created billions of signs about the truth in our selves, in the earth and in the skies. And He has shown us the truth and the right path in His messages which He sent through His messengers. And He gave us the freedom to choose the path we want. And He gave us a certain time so that we find out the truth.

He required us to be in harmony with the truth in our beliefs, words and actions.

Now, in this world there are people of different opinions, beliefs, and actions. And one day, we will die. And on one day -we do not know its timing-, this universe will collapse for a new start. And then it will be replaced. Then everyone will be recreated both physically and spiritually. And everyone will be given the records of what he or she believed in, said and did in the present part of our lives. And there will be the judgment day when Allah will judge with full justice.

Then those people who are in harmony with the truth in their beliefs, words and deeds will be rewarded and directed

to the relevant places in paradise. Those people who did not comply with the truth will be punished and directed to the relevant places in hell.

In this way, the truth will have produced its consequences and the truth will be executed. Minus times minus makes plus, plus times plus makes plus. Like this, both the trueness of the truth, and the falseness of the false will be apparent. Their consequences will be executed. This will happen in the punishment for the bad deeds and in the rewarding for the good deeds. And, as said in the Quran:

So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it;
and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it.
(Quran: 99/7-8)

As a result, in all dimensions and in all degrees, the truth will be apparent for all and executed. Let us remind here that one of the names of Allah is the Truth⁶⁴.

As the truth is eternal, the consequences of complying or non-complying with it in belief will be forever.

3.2.2.2.2.3 THE ESTABLISHMENT OF BALANCE

But those who disbelieve say, "The Hour will not come to us."

Say, "Yes, by my Lord, it will surely come to you. [Allah is] the Knower of the unseen."

⁶⁴ When the word "Truth" is used as a name of Allah, it reflects the powers and attributes of Allah as the only source of anything which cannot be negated. When it is used as a general word, it is mostly used to represent the true knowledge about anything which is independent of persons other than Allah.

Not absent from Him is an atom's weight within the heavens or within the earth or [what is] smaller than that or greater, except that it is in a clear register.

That He may reward those who believe and do righteous deeds.

Those will have forgiveness and noble provision.

But those who strive against Our verses [seeking] to cause failure for them will be a painful punishment of foul nature.

(Quran: 34/3-5)

It is He who has appointed you viceroys in the earth, and has raised some of you in rank above others, that He may try you in what He has given you. Surely your Lord is swift in retribution; and surely He is All-forgiving, All-compassionate.

(Quran: 6/165)

Everything belongs to Him.

(Quran: 27/91)

And the heaven He raised and established the balance.

(Quran: 55/7)

Allah has established balance in this universe. For example, any physical equation or chemical equation comes true when we do an experiment. And if it does not come true, we say that "We" made a mistake. These show us the importance of balance for the Creator.

Thus, we take the balance in the physical world as granted. This shows us that Allah wills and is able to establish balance in the minutest details. So, Allah who is able and who willed to establish this balance in the physical world is of course able to establish such a balance in the universe of good and evil. And He informs us that He is resolute in establishing

such a balance⁶⁵ as we notice in the following verses:

So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it,
And whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it.
(Quran: 99/7-8)

And Allah created the heavens and the earth in truth
and so that every soul may be recompensed for what it
has earned, and they will not be treated unjustly.
(Quran: 45/22)

3.2.2.3 COMMUNICATION AND PROMISE FROM ALLAH

Indeed, this Quran guides to that which is most
suitable,
And gives good tidings to the believers who do
righteous deeds that they will have a great reward.
And that those who do not believe in the Hereafter
We have prepared for them a painful punishment.
(Quran: 17/9-10)

For those who are convinced about the authority of
Allah, the direct logical link to the hereafter is the message of
Allah, who is the All-Powerful and All-Knower.

Allah is the best Knower of what will happen, so only
He can inform us perfectly about the hereafter, as underlined
in the following verse:

And none can inform you like one who is All-Aware.

⁶⁵ Anything that exists or happens has divine implications.
Allah invites to the right way, and not to respond to this invitation
has implications in this world and in the hereafter.

(Quran: 35/14)

Moreover, for any believer in an all-knower and all-powerful god, a message like the Quran may not escape the knowledge of such a god. Like the Quran, in both the Torah and the Gospel there are references to the hereafter as well. An all-knower and all-powerful god has the power to prevent or correct the widely accepted messages about the hereafter given in His name by some people, had those messages been misleading. For any believer in a god who is powerful and knower, would it be possible that the god does not eliminate wide-spread falsehood spoken in his name? Allah says the following on this issue:

Or do they say, “He has invented about Allah a lie”?
But if Allah willed, He could seal over your heart.
And Allah eliminates falsehood and establishes the truth by His words.
Indeed, He is Knowing of that within the breasts.
(Quran: 42/24)

Or do they say, “He has invented it?”
Say, “If I have invented it, you possess naught for [protecting] me from Allah. He is most knowing of that in which you are involved.
Sufficient is He as Witness between me and you, and He is the Forgiving the Merciful.”
(Quran: 46/8)

Has he invented about Allah a lie or is there in him madness?
Rather, they who do not believe in the Hereafter will be in the punishment and [are in] extreme error.
Then, do they not look at what is before them and what is behind them of the heaven and earth?

If We should will, We could cause the earth to swallow them or [could] let fall upon them fragments from the sky.

Indeed in that is a sign for every servant turning back [to Allah].

(Quran: 34/8-9)

3.2.3 PRACTICAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE HEREAFTER⁶⁶

And remember Our servants, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob - Those of strength and [religious] vision.

Indeed, We chose them for an exclusive quality:

Remembrance of the home [of the Hereafter].

(Quran: 38/45-46)

There are practical consequences of believing in the hereafter, for both individuals and society as explained in the following:

3.2.3.1 KNOWING THAT THERE IS A STABLE LIFE

And he who believed said: “O my people! Follow me, I will guide you to the right course;

⁶⁶As Allah is Beneficent, the belief essentials to which He invites us would help us be happy in this world as well. They would be in harmony with our very nature which is best known by Allah. Indeed we see that the belief in the hereafter contributes a lot to our happiness. One is never expected to believe in the hereafter only for any practical worldly gains from the belief; but one may expect that the consequences of the belief required by the Beneficent Allah would be useful in this life as well.

O my people! This worldly life is only the means (to an end),
But the hereafter will be the abode of stability.”
(Quran: 40/ 38-39)

And Iblees⁶⁷ had already confirmed through them his assumption, so they followed him, except for a party of believers.

And he had over them no authority except [it was decreed] that We might make evident who believes in the Hereafter from who is thereof in doubt.

And your Lord, over all things, is Guardian.
(Quran: 34/20-21)

The provision of this world’s life is but little as compared with the Hereafter.
(Quran: 9/38)

And they will say,
“Praise to Allah, who has removed from us [all] sorrow.
Indeed, our Lord is Forgiving and Appreciative.
Who of His bounty has made us to dwell in the abode of everlasting life wherein no weariness assails us neither fatigue.”
(Quran: 35/34-35)

And this worldly life is not but diversion and amusement.
And indeed, the home of the Hereafter, that is the (eternal) life, if only they knew.
(Quran: 29/64)

⁶⁷ The name of a devil

On one hand, we have a lifetime which is like a point when compared with the huge timeframe, and on the other there is a huge effort within us for eternity. If not reconciled, this conflict will be the source of sorrow and disharmony with the truth.

Our life in this world is very little when compared with what we can conceive. Whatever worldly joy we enjoy, and whatever pain we suffer in this life will be left behind. Whether we live in the most luxurious homes, whether we occupy the highest posts, all of them will be left behind. So even if we want to forget that we are mortal or even if we do not remember, we have the knowledge in the depths of our consciousness that there will be an end to all our joys, pleasures, our travels, our meetings...

On the other hand, whatever we have, including our thoughts, feelings, organs, cells aim at eternity. For example, if the fire touches our hand, we pull it backwards willingly or unwillingly.

Are the mechanisms inside ourselves aiming for eternity consistent with the truth, or are they just illusions and shall we end and disappear forever?

The motivation within us for eternity and the knowledge that this life is too limited may cause huge sorrow and conflict. And indeed, the ending of the favors of Allah that we enjoy in this world might be a huge loss. It is difficult for a person to be happy while believing that everything will end by the death, while believing that one day he/she will not be able to see, to hear, to breathe, to move... forever.

So, this person may try to enjoy the joys of this life while trying to forget about the death. Trying to forget the death will require some struggle. Also, satisfying a soul which is enabled to comprehend the infinite with limited joys of this life is difficult. So, trying to satisfy one by only maximizing

the worldly pleasures will cause serious disorders.

Therefore we often see examples of people who aim at doubling their wealth although they have billions of dollars, while there are millions of people who are hungry whom they do not help much. Also we see people who fail in their efforts to increase their worldly wealth legally and who try to get the rights of others in illegitimate ways. Again, we hear of people who tasted all pleasures of this life, but commit suicide because they see that they are not satisfied with the worldly pleasures.

But a person who knows where he goes to; who knows that this life is a preparation stage for the hereafter, that the death is just a stage to be passed will have reconciled his aspirations with an eternal life, both in reality and in thought. In this way, whatever he aims for will overlap with all the dimensions of his nature. And this person will not try to enjoy the joys of this life in an unbalanced way, and will benefit from the joys of this life in balance, peace, and happiness while giving thanks to the Creator.

3.2.3.2 ACCOUNTABILITY

And We establish the scales of justice for the Day of Resurrection,
So no soul is treated unjustly at all.
And if there is [even] the weight of a mustard seed, We will bring it forth.
And sufficient are We as accountant.
(Quran : 21/47)

He is with you wherever you are
And Allah is Seer of what you do.
(Quran: 57/04)

In this world, sometimes people who commit crimes against others go unpunished. The hope of getting undiscovered and unpunished can make some people commit or continue their crimes. But the fact that everything is recorded and will be recompensed discourages many people from committing crimes, and encourages many to do good deeds. And there are many actual examples in this respect.

Also the hopelessness of not being rewarded for good deeds to others, the sacrifices and pains necessary for these good deeds may prevent people from doing good deeds.

Therefore, a situation where the doers of good deeds and the wrongdoers see the consequences of their deeds will encourage the righteous for good deeds and discourage the evildoer from evil deeds. As a consequence belief in the hereafter causes and will cause the world be a better place.

3.2.3.3 HAPPINESS OF THE DIVINE JUSTICE

Then shall we treat the Submitters like the criminals?
(Quran: 68/35)

There are criminals who kill thousands of people, who steal billions of dollars, who upset many people. The end in this world is that they all go to the graveyard like the righteous. In many cases, this is a situation that can upset a person who cares about justice.

Therefore, the judgment day and the following procedures and consequences are important comforting facts for the ones who care about the justice.

3.2.3.4 INCENTIVE FOR IMPROVEMENT

Every soul will taste death.
Then to Us will you be returned.
(Quran: 29/57)

You shall certainly travel from stage to stage (in this life and in the Hereafter).
(Quran: 84/19)

In this world, we study, we increase our experience. However, all knowledgeable people, they die, they go away with their knowledge and experiences. Although these are inherited and used in some cases by the future generations, from a personal point of view, there is a blind alley in terms of improvement.

For a disbeliever in the hereafter, from a personal perspective, all the improvements become nothing for the relevant person at the point of death.

But for a believer in the hereafter, the death is just a stage. For him, every development and goal is governed with the ultimate goal of getting the pleasure of Allah. And this goal requires one to maximize the good works and to become better and better. And this work and this improvement must continue even until death.

And even after death and in the hereafter, as we see in the following verse, any remaining ill-feeling will be removed from the hearts of the good doers, and they will reach ultimate purification with the help of Allah:

And We will have removed whatever is within their breasts of resentment, [while] flowing beneath them are rivers.

And they will say, "Praise to Allah, who has guided us to this; and we would never have been guided if Allah had not guided us.

Certainly the messengers of our Lord had come with the truth." And they will be called, "This is Paradise, which you have been made to inherit for what you used to do."

(Quran: 7/43)

So, for the believer in the hereafter, development is neither unnecessary nor fruitless as the death is not the end.

3.2.3.5 INCENTIVE FOR THINKING AND CHOOSING

Those are the ones who have exchanged guidance for error and forgiveness for punishment. How patient they are in pursuit of the Fire!

(Quran: 2/175)

Especially with the promise of the hell which is an unbearable place and with the promise of the paradise, a human being is driven to take a final decision either to follow what Allah requires or not. Otherwise one could decide that he could endure the punishment, and it would not be worth thinking much about god or about the period after the death. Thus he could argue that his disbelief was not because of his ungratefulness, but because he has been too busy to work on more important matters. The promise of an unbearable punishment closes the door to such hypocrisy.

So as a result of the hereafter a person who has been subject to the invitation of Allah will make a relevant decision

in any case, and if he rejects, he will have taken on the risk like those who do so in the following verses:

And a believing man from the family of Pharaoh who had concealed his faith said, “Do you kill a man [merely] because he says, ‘My Lord is Allah’ while he has brought you clear proofs from your Lord? And if he should be lying, then upon him is [the consequence of] his lie; but if he should be truthful, there will strike you some of what he promises you.”
(Quran: 40/28)

Have you seen the one who forbids,
A servant when he prays?
Have you seen if he is upon guidance
Or enjoins righteousness?
Have you seen if he (the disbeliever) denies (Allah’s guidance) and turns away,
Does he not know that Allah sees?
No! If he does not desist, We will surely drag him by the forehead,
A lying, sinning forehead...
(Quran: 96/9-16)

The hell may sound unfair to some. However, although in this world it may look like that, in the hereafter, it will not, because the disbelievers will then see that all things that they replaced Allah with were nothing and that everything comes from Allah. And they will bear witness that although they have clearly “seen” Allah’s signs, they have “chosen” entering the hell. Those who replaced Allah with the idols, the human beings, the natural forces, physical relationships, the objects, and so on will see that those things had no power at all.

One example about this from the Quran is as follows:

And [beware the Day] when Allah says, “O Jesus, Son of Mary, did you say to the people, ‘Take me and my mother as deities besides Allah?’”

He says, “Exalted are You! It was not for me to say that to which I have no right.

If I had said it, You would have known it.

You know what is within myself, and I do not know what is within Yourself.

Indeed, it is You who is Knower of the unseen.

I said not to them except what You commanded me, to worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. And I was a witness over them as long as I was among them; but when You terminated my life (on earth), You were the Observer over them, and You are, over all things, Witness.

If You should punish them indeed they are Your servants; but if You forgive them indeed it is You who is the Majestic, the Wise.”

Allah says, “This is the Day when the truthful will benefit from their truthfulness. For them are gardens [in Paradise] beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever, Allah being pleased with them, and they with Him. That is the great success.”

(Quran: 5/116-119)

In the hereafter, the disbelievers will not be able to blame anyone but themselves. They will not have any argument at all that will show that they were reasonable in their beliefs in the false gods. This situation has been explained in the following verses:

And We had certainly brought them a Book which We detailed by knowledge -as guidance and mercy to a people who believe-.

Do they await except its result? The Day its result comes those who had ignored it before will say, “The messengers of our Lord had come with the truth, so are there [now] any intercessors to intercede for us or could we be sent back to do other than we used to do?”

They will have lost themselves,

And lost from them is what they used to invent.

(Quran: 7/52-53)

And if [as much as] a breath of the punishment of your Lord should touch them, they would surely say, “O woe to us! Indeed, we have been evildoers.”

(Quran: 21/46)

And [when] the true promise has approached; then suddenly the eyes of those who disbelieved will be staring [in horror, while they say], “O woe to us; we had been unmindful of this; rather, we were evildoers.”

(Quran: 21/97)

On the other hand, a Muslim has to request from Allah entrance into paradise and protection from hell. This is considered as duty, prayer, consequence of his humility and part of his servanthship.

3.3 THE ANGELS

And whoever disbelieves in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, and the Last Day has certainly gone far astray.

(Quran: 4/136)

And certainly did Our (angel) messengers come to Abraham with good tidings;
They said, "Peace." He said, "Peace," and did not delay in bringing [them] a roasted calf.
But when he saw their hands not reaching for it, he distrusted them and felt from them apprehension.
They said, "Fear not. We have been sent to the people of Lot."
(Quran: 11/69-70)

And to Allah prostrates whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth of creatures, and the angels [as well], and they are not arrogant.
(Quran: 16/49)

The angels are creations of Allah that are not defined with the physical or biological rules that we know. They do not have gender; they do not reproduce, do not eat, and do not drink. They perform certain duties given by Allah; they do not choose to disobey Allah.

3.4 THE MESSENGERS OF ALLAH

And We did not send before you, [O Muhammad], any of the messengers except that they ate food and walked in the markets.
And We have made some of you [people] as trial for others,
Will you have patience?
And ever is your Lord, Seeing.
(Quran: 25/20)

O Prophet, indeed We have sent you as a witness and a bringer of good tidings and a warner.

And one who invites to Allah, by His permission, and an illuminating lamp.

(Quran: 33/45-46)

Allah has essentially related His messages to mankind through people He has chosen. These people are called the messengers of Allah.

The messengers are by nature like other human beings. But they are at a high level in terms of certain human qualifications such as moral values. The main reason they have received the divine message is the choice of Allah. There is a reference to this fact in the following verse:

[He is] the Exalted above [all] degrees, Owner of the Throne; He places the inspiration of His command upon whom He wills of His servants to warn of the Day of Meeting.

(Quran: 40/15)

3.4.1 THE MESSENGERS AS ROLE MODELS

The messengers who had values as truthfulness, kindness, thankfulness, righteousness to a great extent are also role models for mankind as we see in the following verses:

There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allah often.

(Quran: 33:21)

And indeed, (O Muhammad) you are of a great moral character.

(Quran: 68/4)

And We gave to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob - all [of them] We guided. And Noah, We guided before. And among his descendants, David and Solomon and Job and Joseph and Moses and Aaron. Thus do We reward the doers of good.

And Zechariah and John and Jesus and Elias and all were of the righteous.

And Ishmael and Elisha and Jonah and Lot - and all [of them] We preferred over the worlds.

And [some] among their fathers and their descendants and their brothers - and We chose them and We guided them to a straight path.

That is the guidance of Allah by which He guides whomever He wills of His servants. But if they had associated others with Allah, then worthless for them would be whatever they were doing.

Those are the ones to whom We gave the Scripture and authority and prophethood. But if the disbelievers deny it, We have already entrusted it to a people who are not disbelievers therein.

Those are the ones whom Allah has guided, so from their guidance take an example.

Say, "I ask of you for this message no payment. It is not but a reminder for the worlds."

(Quran: 6/ 84-90)

It is very important that Allah sent His messages through messengers whom He has assigned from among the human beings. That He has chosen human beings like us and that He shows them as examples for us is an important fact that motivates us and gives us the hope that we can be

successful in the way that Allah shows us. Otherwise, we could not be hopeful about being successful.

Also thanks to the messengers who were like us and the example events, challenges they experienced, and their reactions as human beings we can understand how we have to behave as human beings⁶⁸. For this reason Allah gave many examples of these human beings in the Quran and other holy books: We can see in the Quran how they behaved as a friend, as a leader, as a family member, as a government officer, as a judge, as a servant of Allah, as a person who committed a mistake, as a person who suffered, as a young person, as an old person... The historical records especially about the last Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) show in great detail how he behaved as a businessman, as a husband, as a statesman, as a neighbor, as a teacher... We also see in them how to be thankful, kind, helpful, patient, just, humble...

Allah could have related His messages through just angels or books. But in this case, we could not find examples as fathers, as friends, as leaders, as family members, as businessmen... who are approved by Allah. On the other hand, in this case we might say for example, "But these are angels, and we are not angels, so how can we hope to be successful?" But as Allah has chosen as role models people from among ourselves, who had similar strengths and weaknesses, who have eaten, got married, did business, asked for forgiveness, had health problems, died... then, we can hope to be successful, because we are of the same nature as

⁶⁸ Although the messengers are the best examples for us, they are not the only examples. Allah gives us also examples other than the messengers. For instance, sometimes their wives, their followers, their fathers and others are also shown as positive or negative examples. Also there are many negative examples such as Pharaoh to whom Prophet Moses (Peace be upon him) was sent. We are required to avoid being like those negative examples.

the messengers and Allah tells us that they were successful.

3.4.2 SOME MESSENGERS ARE PROPHESED AND CONFIRMED

The messengers prophesied certain future messengers as we see in the prophecies about Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) in the former holy books. Some of those prophecies are as follows⁶⁹:

In the Old Testament/ Deuteronomy/18/18-19 we see the following statements: “I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.”⁷⁰

Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) was not Jewish, but he came from the offspring of Prophet Abraham through his son Ishmael (Peace be upon them). Therefore, the future messenger is said to be raised from “among their brethren”, neither from among “their offspring” nor from among “themselves”. And that prophet would be “like unto” Moses (Peace be upon him). Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) was indeed like Moses (Peace be upon him) in many ways such as being also a worldly leader.

Also Allah put His words in his “mouth” and “he spoke unto his people” all that Allah “commanded him”: Prophet

⁶⁹ For more information about such prophecies, please see part 8.6.

⁷⁰ Unless otherwise noted, the quotes from the Bible are taken from King James Version.

Muhammad (Peace be upon him) never read anything, never wrote anything in his life, as prophesied he recited the Quran, the word of Allah. This book was recorded in his memory⁷¹ and the scribes of revelation wrote it down.

Again Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) had victory over his opponents, which confirms also what is said in the above verse of Deuteronomy as “it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.”

Also, in the New Testament, in the gospel of John, part 16 verses 12-13 Jesus-Christ (Peace be upon him) says that he was not able to relate to his people certain truth as they were not able to bear it. And he gives the good news that another messenger who will lead to all truth will come: “I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the spirit of the truth⁷², is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.”

These prophecies were also what exactly happened with Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) who was

⁷¹ This was also an extraordinary aspect of the Quran: A book consisting of approximately 600 pages was being recited from memory by a person who did not read nor write anything in his entire life; in this book it was said that this book was put in his memory by Allah; he was reciting it partially at least five times a day and tested; and he was recommending others to record and memorize it.

⁷² Literally “the spirit of the truth” although it is changed in the translations as “the spirit of truth”. Note that the word “spirit” is a word used for prophets as well. For example, 1 John 4:1 is as follows: “Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” (Translation: New International Version)

unlettered as we clearly see in the Quran:

Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered prophet, whom they find written in what they have of the Torah and the Gospel, who enjoins upon them what is right and forbids them what is wrong and makes lawful for them the good things and prohibits for them the evil and relieves them of their burden and the shackles which were upon them. So they who have believed in him, honored him, supported him and followed the light which was sent down with him it is those who will be the successful.

(Quran: 7/157)

Neither did you (O Muhammad) read any book before it (this Quran), nor did you write any book (whatsoever) with your right hand. In that case, indeed, the followers of falsehood might have doubted.

(Quran: 29/48)

We will make you recite (the Quran), [O Muhammad], and you will not forget,

(Quran: 87/06)

It is miraculous that Muhammad (Peace be upon him) who knew neither writing nor reading related a book as the Quran. The people who have written a book or maybe only a comprehensive text may imagine how it would not be possible to compose a book without being able to write nor to read. On the other hand, to write a book like the Quran would be even impossible for someone who is literate as mentioned in the challenge in the following verse:

And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down upon Our Servant [Muhammad], then produce a

surah⁷³ the like thereof and call upon your witnesses other than Allah, if you should be truthful.
(Quran: 2/23)

The arrival of Muhammad (Peace be upon him) is also a confirmation of Moses and Jesus (Peace be upon them) in that their predictions were not in vain.

So, in harmony with the prophecies of previous messengers, approximately 1400 years ago, Allah, related to human beings His spoken message for the last time, through His final Messenger to all mankind called Muhammad (Peace be upon him). In the following verse there is a reference to this fact:

Muhammad is not the father of [any] one of your men, but [he is] the Messenger of Allah and last of the prophets. And Allah has full knowledge of all things.
(Quran: 33/40)

As Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) successfully delivered the final and complete message of Allah to mankind without any ambiguities, and as this message is historically protected, there is no need for further messengers. And indeed after him there has not come any messenger like him or Moses or Jesus (Peace be upon them) with clear miracles and signs.

The messengers came with miracles which show that they and the messages they brought are approved by Allah who is absolute and who has power over all things. The miracles of the prophets Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus (Peace be upon them) are widely known. The messengers do not have the powers to produce these miracles, but Allah has.

⁷³ Chapter

Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) also was subject to many miracles with the power of Allah: Among hundreds of historically recorded miracles the most important is the Quran which is a book full of wisdom. The Quran contains also many scientific facts that were not known by human beings in the age it was revealed⁷⁴. There is information in the Quran about the events that happened many centuries before the time of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him), about secret and private events in his time, about the future. These form another group of miracles. In the words of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) also we see similar extraordinary information.

Miracles relating to supernatural events like the splitting of the moon, miracles relating to healing cases normally impossible to heal, miracles relating to increasing food and water, miracles relating to the protection of the messenger are some other kinds of miracles that were historically recorded and witnessed by hundreds of people. Some of those are mentioned in the Quran.

3.4.3 SOME OTHER ATTRIBUTES OF THE MESSENGERS

The messengers came to the mankind and they are not identified based on Christianity or Judaism or any special ethnicity. There are explanations about this in the following verses:

Or do you say that Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the Descendants were Jews or Christians? Say, "Are you more knowing or is Allah?" And who is

⁷⁴ Some examples are given in the following part.

more unjust than one who conceals a testimony he has from Allah? And Allah is not unaware of what you do. (Quran: 2/140)

Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was one inclining toward truth, a Muslim (submitting to Allah). And he was not of the polytheists. (Quran: 3/67)

All those mentioned in the Quran as messengers are males. As the messengership is an extremely dangerous job, this is natural. Almost in all cases some disbelievers attempted to test Allah or tried to stop the promotion of His message by harming His messengers, by insulting, threatening, injuring, boycotting, killing them, their friends, their relatives... The invitation to Allah required continual hard works day and night. All these might cause a woman messenger to undergo additional difficulties, unbearable pain, and insufficient communication of the message. Due to their special attributes and situations, we observe for example that women mostly do not prefer to work in many difficult sectors such as construction, mining... International Labor Organization set regulations, limitations and recommendations for women regarding night work, dangerous work, pregnancy leaves, and privacy requirements... So it is wise that Allah restricted the messengership of women.

However, Allah mentions in the Quran that He chose and set as example certain women. Mary and the wife of Pharaoh (Peace be upon them) mentioned in the Quran are examples in this respect.

3.5 THE BOOKS OF ALLAH

3.5.1 THE HOLY BOOKS IN GENERAL

He has sent down upon you, [O Muhammad], the Book in truth, confirming what was before it. And He revealed the Torah and the Gospel.

(Quran: 3/3)

We relate to you, [O Muhammad], the best of stories in what We have revealed to you of this Quran although you were, before it, among the unaware.

(Quran: 12/3)

Say, "Have you considered: if it (the Quran) is from Allah and you disbelieved in it, who would be more astray than one who is in extreme dissension?"

(Quran: 41/52)

And certainly We have made the Qur'an easy to understand, but is there anyone who will mind?

(Quran: 54/17)

Islam requires belief in the Holy Books of Allah as we see in the above verses. In the Quran, the holy books related through Muhammad, Jesus, Moses and David (Peace be upon them) have been mentioned by name; but we know through the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) that there have been many other messengers. They also related the messages of Allah.

The books of Allah are His messages related to mankind through His messengers in order to give mankind fundamental knowledge, so that they are guided, so that they

may reflect upon it, so that they do not follow blind faiths, and so that they may be successful. The following verse makes reference to this:

This [Quran] is a blessed Book which We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], that they might reflect upon its verses and that those of understanding would be reminded.
(Quran: 38/29)

This knowledge relates to Allah, the human being, the universe, the truth, the life, the hereafter, the goals, the way, the success, where we come from, where we go to, what we need to do, how we have to be, the relevant examples, and many other critical issues some of which you see in this book which you read. The words of Allah with its style or its content give us objective and direct information about Himself as does an object, a living creature, and a positive or negative event. This knowledge is useful for success in this world and in the sight of Allah.

In an introductory verse of the Quran Allah says:

This is the book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for the righteous.
(Quran:2/2).

Some aspects of this knowledge were unknown by human beings. In the following there is a reference to this:

Read, and your Lord is the most Generous
Who taught by the pen
Taught the human what he did not know.
(Quran: 96/3-5)

The holy books before the Quran have been subject to

human intervention. In the following verses there are references to this:

And they did not appraise Allah with true appraisal when they said, “Allah did not reveal to a human being anything.”

Say, “Who revealed the Scripture that Moses brought as light and guidance to the people?

You [Jews] make it into pages, disclosing [some of] it and concealing much.

And you were taught that which you knew not - neither you nor your fathers.”

Say, “Allah [revealed it].” Then leave them in their [empty] discourse, amusing themselves.

(Quran: 6/91)

Do you covet [the hope, O believers], that they would believe for you while a party of them used to hear the words of Allah⁷⁵ and then distort it after they had understood it while they were knowing?

(Quran: 2/75)

Among them there are some illiterates who do not know their Holy Book; they follow their own desires and do nothing but conjecture.

So woe to those who write the scripture with their own hands, then say, “This is from Allah,” in order to exchange it for a small price. Woe to them for what their hands have written and woe to them for what they earn.

(Quran: 2/78-79)

However, as Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him)

⁷⁵ The Torah

was the last of the messengers, in the following verse Allah gives the guarantee to protect the book brought by him:

Indeed, it is We who sent down the Quran and indeed,
We will be its guardian.
(Quran: 15/9)

And historically the Quran was protected.

3.5.2 THE QURAN

This is the book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for the righteous.
(Quran:2/2).

A Muslim has to believe in the Quran; and he has to believe that in their original forms, the Torah, Gospel, and Psalms are also the words of Allah.

3.5.2.1 THE QURAN IS A COMPLETE GUIDANCE

One of the features of the Quran is that it clearly explains everything in certain fundamental aspects. This is noted in the following verses:

Never was the Quran a narration invented, but a confirmation of what was before it and a detailed explanation of all things and guidance and mercy for a people who believe.
(Quran: 12/111)

And We have sent down to you the Book as clarification for all things and as guidance and mercy and good tidings for the Muslims.
(Quran: 16/89)

This level of detail cancels the need for an intermediary between Allah and the individual who will interpret fundamental issues⁷⁶. The practice of Prophet Muhammad

⁷⁶ Therefore in Islam if any serious individual spends efforts, he may find out his way with the help of Allah, the Quran, and the example life of the messenger of Allah. Also thanks to the sufficient level of details in the Quran, the differences between the denominations under or directly related to Islam are about the secondary issues, or issues that do not relate to Islam.

For example, all of the major four Sunni sects are acceptable for the other Sunni sects. The differences mostly relate to the issues that do not affect the essentials of the prayers: For example, the adherents of all these sects perform prostration, Quran recitation in the prayers. However, in one of them a person may not be required to join his hands while standing during the prayer, while in the other this may be considered to be better. So the adherents of both sects may perform their prayers together in the leadership of the adherent of the other sect. However in many religions the adherents of different denominations in the same religion may even be worshipping different gods or forms of god.

Again because of the clearness of the Quran and its easiness the differences among all denominations of Islam are very little within the total.

On the other hand, thanks to the sufficient level of details in the Quran, any person may distinguish if a certain belief belongs to Islam or not. So elements of beliefs or actions which are not explained in the Quran or in the reliable hadith or through these, may easily be classified as cultural, ethnical, personal or political issues that do not relate to Islam, even though some people claim that they are Islamic.

There may always be people who claim some personal ideas in the name of Islam. Every Muslim should ask to be given a

(Peace be upon him) to which Allah makes clear references are also useful in terms of completeness of the final message. This completeness also removes the need for further messengers.

As the real sources of the Quran, and the original texts of the Gospel and Torah are the same, there are lots of similarities between the contents of the Quran and today's Bible. They all invite to Allah and good deeds. However, as the previous holy books have been subject to changes, there are also fundamental differences between the contents of the New and Old Testaments and their interpretations by their followers and the Quran. For example, in the Quran the trinity is clearly rejected, while for most Christians according to the current Gospel there is trinity. Jesus (Peace be upon him) is neither god nor son of god according to the Quran. Some of the verses of the Quran relevant to this issue are as follows:

And [beware the Day] when Allah says,
“O Jesus, Son of Mary, did you say to the people, ‘Take me and my mother as deities besides Allah?’”
He(, Jesus Christ) says,
“Exalted are You! It was not for me to say that to which I have no right. If I had said it, You would have known it. You know what is within myself, and I do not know what is within Yourself. Indeed, it is You who is Knower of the unseen.
I said not to them except what You commanded me (saying): “Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. And I was a witness over them as long as I was among them; but when You took me up, You were the Observer over them, and You are, over all things, Witness.”

consistent explanation related to the Quran or to the reliable hadith regarding the idea he is not clear about.

(Quran: 5/116-117)

You can find some other differences between the contents of the Quran and the Bible in questions and answers part.

3.5.2.2 THE QURAN WAS PROTECTED

In the Quran, Allah informs us that He descended it and He gives the guarantee that He will protect it. The Quran was firstly written into the memory of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) permanently as we see in the following verses:

We will make you recite, [O Muhammad], and you will not forget, except what Allah should will. Indeed, He knows what is declared and what is hidden.
(Quran: 87/6-7)

Move not your tongue with it, [O Muhammad], to hasten with recitation of the Quran.
Indeed, upon Us is its collection (in your heart) and (to make possible) its recitation.
(Quran: 75/16-17)

Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) was reciting the Quran and the scribes were writing it down and many of his friends were memorizing it. In the months of Ramadan the angel Gabriel and Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon them) were reciprocally reciting and listening to the parts of the Quran revealed up to that month of Ramadan. In the last month of Ramadan before Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) died, this happened twice. There was approximately ten people who had already memorized the entire Quran when Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him)

died. There was also many other people who had memorized many chapters.

Shortly after Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) died, a written copy of the whole Quran was collected into a single bounded volume with the confirmation of qualified witnesses. And from that volume several other volumes were copied. And the Quran has been protected in its initial form and this is a historical fact. There is only one version of the Quran everywhere in the world. The original and today also available text of the Quran is in Arabic, which is a living language today. All of its words, sentences and chapters are available in the original shape as if they have been revealed today.

3.5.2.3 THE STYLE OF THE QURAN

In the style of the Quran the speaker as the first person is Allah⁷⁷. So this style is not so that to reflect the understanding or interpretation of any human being. The Prophet (Peace be upon him) said exactly what he received without adding or reducing anything. For example, a verse starts as “Say I am only a human being like you”⁷⁸... So the Prophet relates this and the writers write it down. The Prophet

⁷⁷ For certain points to bear in mind while reading the Quran see part 8.7.

⁷⁸ The full verse is like this:

Say (O Muhammad), “I am only a human being like you; it is revealed to me that your god is one God. So whoever would hope for the meeting with his Lord let him do righteous work and not associate in the worship of his Lord anyone.”

(Quran: 18/110)

(Peace be upon him) does not say “I am only a human being like you”, he says exactly what he was revealed. So the style of the Quran is so that no human intervention exists in it, not even any intervention of the messenger. And all of the Quran came only through the mouth of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) as a human being.

This process was exactly as Jesus-Christ (Peace be upon him) foretold in the gospel of John 16/13: “Howbeit when he, the spirit of the truth⁷⁹, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.” Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him), with the Quran, with the spirit of the truth which is in his heart and in his memory, guides into “all” truth. And he does not “speak” of himself, but he speaks whatsoever he “hears”. He receives the revelation from Allah, the same source as the source of Jesus-Christ (Peace be upon him) as stated in the following verse:

And thus We have revealed to you a spirit of Our command.

You did not know what is the Book or [what is] the faith, but We have made it a light by which We guide whom We will of Our servants. And indeed, [O Muhammad], you guide to a straight path.
(Quran: 42/52)

3.5.2.4 THE QURAN IS INIMITABLE

As we see in the following verses, Allah invites those who are in doubt about the Quran to compose a book as strong as the Quran and to prove it by sufficient witnesses:

⁷⁹ Literally “the spirit of the truth” although it is changed in the translations as the spirit of truth.

And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down upon Our Servant [Muhammad], then produce a chapter the like thereof and call upon your witnesses other than Allah, if you should be truthful.

(Quran: 2/23)

Or do they say, “He invented it”? Say, “Then bring ten chapters like it that have been invented and call upon [for assistance] whomever you can besides Allah, if you should be truthful.”

And if they do not respond to you then know that the Quran was revealed with the knowledge of Allah and that there is no deity except Him. Then, would you [not] be Muslims.

(Quran: 11/13-14)

In the past there have been some attempts to produce chapters like the chapters of the Quran, but they failed.

Another invitation is in the following verse. A disbeliever should answer the following question by proposing a book other than the Quran which would be more worthy to believe in and to follow:

In what message after this will they then believe?

(Quran: 7/185)

In the Quran there are many scientific facts that were not known or that were against the scientific beliefs until recently. But centuries later it has been discovered that what was said in the Quran was correct. One can find lots of such examples easily by searching keywords as “miracles in the Quran” on the internet.

And below are just a few examples of facts that existed

in the Quran⁸⁰ for centuries, but that have been scientifically discovered just recently:

The expansion of the universe:

And the heaven We constructed with strength, and indeed, We are [its] expander.
(Quran: 51/47)

The big bang:

Have those who disbelieved not considered that the heavens and the earth were a joined entity, and We separated them and made from water every living thing? Then will they not believe?
(Quran: 21/30)

The barriers between the seas:

He released the two seas, meeting [side by side];
Between them is a barrier [so] neither of them transgresses.
So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?
From both of them emerge pearl and coral⁸¹.
(55/19-22)

⁸⁰ Note that the Quran has come from the mouth of only one person who lived 1400 years ago, who never studied in any school, who did not write nor read anything. Also it was a book written in such an environment where scripture was written on the skins of animals and other similar simple material.

⁸¹ In the last decades it was discovered that the water of some seas as the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean do not coalesce thanks to a physical characteristic called “surface tension”. This property was not known at the time of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him).

These are just a few of the examples that show us that the One who sent the Quran has full knowledge.

3.6 THE DESTINY

And ever is the command of Allah a destiny⁸² decreed.
(Quran: 33/38)

He to whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and who has not taken a son and has not had a partner in dominion and has created each thing and determined it with [precise] determination.
(Quran: 25/2)

And not absent from your Lord is any [part] of an atom's weight within the earth or within the heaven or [anything] smaller than that or greater but that it is in a clear register.
(Quran: 10/61)

They say, "If there was anything we could have done in the matter, some of us would not have been killed right here." Say, "Even if you had been inside your houses, those decreed to be killed would have come out to their death beds."
(Quran: 3/154)

Say, "Never will we be struck except by what Allah has decreed for us."

⁸² Transliterated as "Kadar", "kader" or "qadar" from the original text of the Quran. The word predestination is also used synonymously for the word destiny.

(Quran: 9/51)

3.6.1 DESCRIPTION

The destiny is made by Allah and it is a comprehensive and clear record of the creation and the events created by Allah. The destiny has many different aspects.

In one way it is a register that includes also both worldly and religious cause and effect relationships and definitions. Physical, biological definitions of objects, physical laws and the relevant relationships or the relationships between bad deed and the relevant punishments may be cited as examples in this respect. This is partially explained in the following verses:

Exalt the name of your Lord, the Most High,
Who created and proportioned
And who determined and [then] guided.
(Quran: 87/1-3)

[Pharaoh] said, so who is the Lord of you two, O Moses?
He said: Our Lord is He Who gave everything its nature
then guided it.
(Quran: 20/49-50)

And of the people is he who disputes about Allah
without knowledge and follows every rebellious devil.
For him it is written down that whoever takes him for
friend, he verily will mislead him and will guide him to
the punishment of the Flame.
(Quran: 22/3-4)

As understood from the following verses, regarding the

acts of Allah the destiny is like a plan:

And for every nation is a [specified] term.
So when their time has come, they will not remain
behind an hour, nor will they precede [it].
(Quran: 7/34)

So he⁸³ invoked his Lord,
“Indeed, I am overcome, so help.”
Then We opened the gates of the heaven⁸⁴ with rain
pouring down,
And caused the earth to burst with springs,
And the waters met for a matter already predestined.
(Quran: 54/10-12)

Allah has written down: I will most certainly prevail, I
and My messengers.
(Quran: 58/21)

Furthermore the destiny has the feature of a budget for
the distribution of resources as mentioned in the following
verse:

And there is no creature on earth but that upon Allah is
its provision, and He knows its place of dwelling and
place of storage.
All is in a clear register.
(Quran: 11/6)

On the other hand the destiny is like a historical
record⁸⁵ from the perspective of Allah who knows and

⁸³ Noah (Peace be upon him)

⁸⁴ Sky

⁸⁵ While it includes the future

witnesses the future without any limitations of time. So although we have free will to a certain extent, everything is ever known by Allah. In the following verses there is a reference to such knowledge of Allah:

No soul knows what it shall earn tomorrow, and no soul knows in what land it shall die. Surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.
(Quran: 31/34)

He knows what is before them and what is after them, and they encompass not a thing of His knowledge except for what He wills.
(Quran: 2/255)

Indeed Allah is ever, over all things, a Witness.
(Quran: 4/33)

Allah encompasses all things.
(Quran: 4/126)

To Allah belongs the command before and after.
(Quran: 30/4)

Also the destiny has the property of Allah's anterior and posterior permission for any wills and acts of His creations. Nothing can happen contrary to His will as seen in the following verse:

And it is not for a soul to believe except by permission of Allah.
(Quran: 10/100)

3.6.2 CONSEQUENCES OF DESTINY FOR HUMAN BEINGS

In any act of Allah, who knows all, including the future we can assume that there are all positive aspects of a perfect plan in any case, even if there is no recorded plan. So we can expect everything He does to be consistent and balanced as something perfectly planned. Allah does not need the destiny in order to create or sustain anything. However, from a human perspective, it has certain implications as mentioned in the following verses:

No disaster strikes upon the earth or among yourselves except that it is in a register before We bring it into being. Indeed that, for Allah, is easy.

In order that you not despair over what has eluded you and not exult [in pride] over what He has given you.

And Allah does not like everyone self-deluded and boastful.

(Quran: 57/22-23)

This register has significant consequences for us:

In conformity with the destiny, as we are in a well-determined framework, we also can make plans, and we can determine goals. Thanks to this we are able to think and to have our own will. Otherwise, we could not have any continuity that we need to think and to link event (a) to event (b) or means to goals.

Also without such a framework, we would feel very insecure. For instance, we live on a planet which moves with a speed of thousands of kilometers per hour. There are millions of variables, many of which if slightly deviated would cause us to disappear immediately. However, everything is under control, so that we have a strong feeling

of security. We expect to live the next hour, the next day, the next year, and we can make plans, we can make choices. On the other hand, even if certain disasters⁸⁶ happen, we would know that they are part of a plan of the One God who is Wise; that they are not coincidental; that they are already known at least by the All-Powerful and All-Knower; and that they will serve certain higher goals.

On the other hand, thanks to the Destiny, we know that everything is under the control of our beloved One God, so we are not hopeless. And thanks to this we know that something that we miss may go to another one of His servants. Thus we can relate everything to the registry, and the registry to its Maker, and this Maker to ourselves.

We will consider a question about destiny, free will, responsibility, reward and punishment in detail in part 8.3.

4 THE GOALS GIVEN BY ISLAM TO A HUMAN BEING

That home of the Hereafter We assign to those who do not desire exaltedness upon the earth or corruption.
And the (best) result belongs to the righteous.
(Quran: 28/83)

Islam is a result based religion. Throughout the Quran there are lots of references to the results, Allah invites us to concentrate on the result; and He warns us against being

⁸⁶ The disasters in one way serve as examples which show us what would happen without the mercy of Allah, which show us that Allah is able to do all things, which show us that such things may happen in the hereafter. For more details relevant in this respect about see part 8.4.

deceived by the temporary as in the following verse:

The example of Paradise, which the righteous have been promised, is that beneath it rivers flow. Its fruit is lasting, and its shade.

That is the result of the righteous, and the result of the disbelievers is the Fire.

(Quran: 13/35)

According to Islam, the most fundamental choice a human being has to make is to choose Islam or not. Then immediately a big question arises: What does Islam give a human being? Or in other words, why one should choose Islam? What is the goal of Islam regarding a human being?

So, in this part, we will clarify the main goals and benefits that Islam gives to a human being. Also we will give the details about the biggest success in our life according to Islam.

A human being is not created uselessly, and he is created so that he/she reaches certain goals. This is an important message of Allah to us which we clearly see in the following verse:

Then did you think that We created you uselessly and that to Us you would not be returned?

(Quran: 23/115)

In the following verse we see the goals and essential elements of the biggest success:

Allah will say:

This is the Day when the truthful will benefit from their truthfulness.

For them are gardens [in Paradise] beneath which
rivers flow,
Wherein they will abide forever,
Allah being pleased with them, and they with Him.
That is the great success.
(Quran: 5/119)

These goals are to be in harmony with the truth; to reach the favors Allah promised and prepared for His righteous servants, to enter Paradise; to get Allah's pleasure; and to be satisfied.

4.1 TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE TRUTH

Allah will say:
This is the Day when the truthful will benefit from their truthfulness.
For them are gardens [in Paradise] beneath which
rivers flow,
Wherein they will abide forever,
Allah being pleased with them, and they with Him.
That is the great success.
(Quran: 5/119)

As we see in the emphasis made to truthfulness in the above verse, an important element of the big success is to be truthful, to be in harmony with the truth. If we are in harmony with the truth in what we believe in, what we say, and what we do then this is a big step toward the biggest success.

To be truthful requires being in harmony with the most important truth.

As we see in the following verse, one of the names of Allah is the Truth:

Allah is the Truth.
(Quran: 22/6)

4.1.1 TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE TRUTH IN WHAT WE BELIEVE IN

The truth is not the consequence of our personal beliefs, and it is independent from our personal beliefs. The entire truth is one although there are many different belief profiles. Therefore all of the different belief profiles cannot be in harmony with the truth simultaneously. For example, if a Muslim is in harmony with the truth, then a polytheist is not; and if the polytheist is in harmony with the truth then a Muslim is not. Logically both cannot be true altogether⁸⁷.

According to Islam it is very useful and necessary that our belief is in harmony with the truth, and it is very dangerous to be in conflict with the truth. And in the following verses Allah tells us about the source and the main channels of the truth:

Indeed, We have sent you, [O Muhammad], with the truth⁸⁸ as a bringer of good tidings and a warner, and you will not be asked about the companions of Hellfire.
(Quran: 2/119)

The truth is from your Lord,
So never be among the doubters.

⁸⁷ Some believe that “All different beliefs may be true at the same time”. So for such people, is this belief equally true compared to the belief “All beliefs may NOT be true at the same time”?

⁸⁸ The entire Quran that was taught to him and this book was in his memory, and his actions as examples for the whole mankind were some important elements of the truth with him.

(Quran: 2/147)

4.1.2 TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE TRUTH IN WHAT WE SAY AND WHAT WE DO

What we say has to be in harmony with the truth as noted in the following verse:

So who is more unjust than one who lies about Allah and denies the truth when it has come to him? Is there not in Hell a residence for the disbelievers?

(Quran: 39/32)

When we believe in and say something, then we have to act accordingly. Otherwise, we have to think about the cause of the variance between what we do and what we say. Maybe we do not care at all about the truth, maybe we are not sincere in what we say or maybe we are liar; which are big problems. There is a reference to this in the following verse:

O you who have believed, why do you say what you do not do?

(Quran: 61/2)

Once we believe in and claim to follow the truth, then what we do must be in harmony with what we believe in and what we say as mentioned in the following verse:

Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west, but righteousness is [in] one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets and gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveler, those who ask [for help], and for freeing slaves; [and who]

establishes prayer and gives mandatory charity; [those who] fulfill their promise when they promise; and [those who] are patient in poverty and hardship and during battle.

Those are they who are truthful;
And it is those who are the righteous.

(Quran: 2/177)

This is the only way to the big success.

So in part 5 you will find important information about the action essentials of Islam.

4.2 TO REACH ALLAH'S PERMANENT FAVORS MADE FOR HIS RIGHTEOUS SERVANTS

If He will be pleased with us, He will make us also fully pleased with the favors He promised and prepared for His righteous servants. One of His attributes is the Appreciative.

Muslims believe as said in the following statement in the Quran that Allah is:

What a good Patron!
(Quran: 8/40)

And that His mercy is immense⁸⁹:

My mercy encompasses all things.
(Quran: 7/156)

⁸⁹ So how bad would be the situation of someone with whom Allah who is so Beneficent is not pleased?

In the present life also, the divine love, the belief in Allah, the values and actions required by Allah are the only things that can satisfy us.

And the paradise is the place where we may be fully and permanently satisfied.

4.3 TO GET THE PLEASURE OF ALLAH

The ultimate goal of life for a Muslim is to get the pleasure of Allah. If achieved, this goal will yield the following goals as well: To be pleased by Him, to enter paradise and to reach full satisfaction in this world and in the hereafter.

4.3.1 THE WAY TO THE PLEASURE OF ALLAH

The sub-goals and the way that lead to this major goal are as follows:

4.3.1.1 COMPLIANCE WITH THE DIVINE VALUES

Allah has certain values. He loves certain values. So a person, who loves Allah and wants to invoke His love, has also to carry those values and improve himself in harmony with them.

In the following verses we see from His own words some of the qualifications He loves:

Allah loves the good-doers.
(Quran: 2/195)

Surely Allah loves those who turn much (to Him), and
He loves those who purify themselves.
(Quran: 2/222)

Allah loves the righteous.
(Quran: 3/76)

Allah loves the patient⁹⁰.
(Quran: 3/146)

Surely Allah loves those who trust [in Him].
(Quran: 3/159)

Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly.
(Quran: 5/42)

There are also qualifications that Allah does not love,
so we have to get rid of such qualifications or to control them.
In the following verses we see some of the qualifications
Allah does not love:

Surely Allah loves not the aggressors.
(Quran: 2/190)

Indeed, Allah does not love everyone treacherous and
ungrateful.
(Quran: 22/38)

Allah does not love the corrupters.
(Quran: 28/77)

Indeed, He does not love the arrogant.

⁹⁰ Or steadfast

(Quran: 16/23)

Allah does not love the evildoers.

(Quran: 3/57)

The details about other divine values that Allah loves and about qualifications that He does not love can be learnt from the Quran.

So, firstly and most generally, human beings including non-Muslims have to care about the universal divine values that Allah loves and have to spend efforts to improve themselves regarding them so that they may be candidate for being guided by Allah. An evildoer, unjust, arrogant person is not entitled to the guidance of Allah, and is not accepted by Allah. So in order to be successful, and in order to be a real believer, one must overcome such negative qualifications. The following verses are some examples in this context:

Allah does not guide aright the unjust people.

(Quran: 2/258)

I will turn away from My signs those who are arrogant upon the earth without right.

(Quran: 7/146)

Indeed, Allah does not guide one who is a transgressor and a liar.

(Quran: 40/28)

Those negative qualifications will also form big psychological barriers that will prevent the belief in an All-Powerful, an All-Knower God. For example, imagine a person who consciously or unconsciously believes that he is the most important and the biggest as an individual, or as a citizen of a certain country, or as a member of a certain nation,

or as a human being. Such a person will have a psychological problem in believing in a god who is more knower than himself. Unfortunately, the present education systems, lifestyles, games, and other elements of the environment mostly promote such an arrogant mindset. Also many religions promote a similar mindset by deifying human beings, or statutes and gods made by human beings, or physical laws discovered by human beings...

4.3.1.2 OBJECTIVE MEASURES SHOULD BE FULFILLED TO GET THE PLEASURE OF ALLAH

To Him ascends good speech,
And righteous work raises it.
(Quran: 35/10)

To be successful one should improve himself regarding the values loved by Allah and comply sincerely with those values through performing the requirements in the belief and action sides.

These requirements are very important because they are objective measures. Allah measures our levels of compliance with His values not only based on our words, but also based on our beliefs and our actions. Our words may be subjective and misleading. As we read in the following statements, Allah uses objective criteria to evaluate us:

It will not be in accordance with your desires
[Muslims], nor those of the people of the Scripture
[Jews and Christians];
Whosoever works evil, will have the recompense
thereof, and he will not find any protector or helper
besides Allah.

(Quran: 4/123)

And of the people are some who say,
“We believe in Allah and the Last Day,”
But they are not believers.
(Quran: 2/8)

Therefore it is not possible to get the pleasure of Allah if a person is in full error in his beliefs and/or his actions. A person who is righteous, humble, fair, thankful, and perseverant may be in harmony with the truth in both belief and action categories with some efforts.

So, a person who is unjust, arrogant, ungrateful will only be successful and perform both belief and action requirements if he overcomes these unwanted qualifications that are within him⁹¹. The following verse is an example in this respect:

I will turn away from My signs those who are arrogant
upon the earth without right.
(Quran: 7/146)

So, on one hand thanks to our beliefs and actions which comply with the truth, we can improve ourselves in parallel with the divine values, and we can be entitled to the divine

⁹¹ However, this does not mean that whoever believes that he is Muslim is far from these unwanted attributes. Each Muslim also prays to Allah so that he and his belief are accepted by Him. This does not mean either that Allah guides to Islam “all people” who have the good attributes because for true faith there are other factors as well. One of them is the exposure to the message of Allah, which is also a condition for responsibility in the sight of Allah as we see in the following verse:

And never would We punish until We sent a messenger.
(Quran: 17/15).

love and the paradise. And on the other hand observing our beliefs and actions, we can measure where we are in the universe of those values.

A person who complies with the divine values will first of all perform his duties toward his Creator. So, he will recognize Him; he will believe in His Messages, His Messengers and His promises; and he will worship Him. Such a person will also perform his duties towards others, namely the human beings, the creatures, the environment...

And he will be advanced in degrees according to his relevant knowledge, belief and deeds as said in the following verses:

Look how We have favored [in provision] some of them over others. But the Hereafter is greater in degrees and greater in distinction.
(Quran: 17/21)

And for all there are degrees for what they have done, and so that He may fully compensate them for their deeds, and they will not be wronged.
(Quran: 46/19)

But whoever comes to Him as a believer having done righteous deeds for those will be the highest degrees.
(Quran: 20/75)

Allah will raise those who have believed among you and those who were given knowledge, by degrees. And Allah is Cognizant of what you do.
(Quran: 58/11)

4.4 TO REACH SATISFACTION

If we really have the necessary values and qualifications, then Allah loves us. When we get His love, and when we are pleased with Him, then we will have been pleased with everything and have reached full satisfaction. Then we will have our share of the following statements of Allah, and have reached the biggest success:

(To the righteous soul it will be said:)

“O fully satisfied soul!

Return to your Lord, well-pleased and pleasing [to Him],

And enter among My [righteous] servants

And enter My Paradise.”

(Quran: 89/27-30)

What a good servant!

(Quran: 38/44)

Verily, amid gardens and rivers shall the righteous dwell.

In the seat of truth,

In the presence of the potent King.

(Quran: 54/54-55)

5 ESSENTIALS OF ACTION & FIVE PILLARS

As noted above, to be in harmony with the truth in what we do and what we say is one of the basic conditions of success. This condition is explained below:

5.1 ESSENTIALS OF ACTION

They believe in Allah and the Last Day, and they enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and hasten to good deeds.

And those are among the righteous.

(Quran: 3/114)

Islam does not consist only of belief. Islam also requires action⁹². The required behavior is to do “good deeds”⁹³. In the Quran, belief is generally mentioned together with good deeds.

Good deeds are deeds that are in harmony with the truth. For example, it was noted earlier that one of the attributes of Allah is that He is “One”, and one of His attributes is that He is “Near”. So He is the God of all. And He is Nearer to us even than our parents, even than our other

⁹²In Islam our conscious actions are broadly classified in five groups: The first consists of the obligations such as regular charity, paying back debt, or obligatory daily prayers. Not performing the obligations is considered as sin and requires punishment unless forgiven by Allah. The second group consists of actions which are not in the first group but which are recommended or performed by the messenger like the additional parts of the daily prayer; these help gain the pleasure of Allah. The third group consists of neutral activities such as eating. The fourth group consists of unpleasant acts, which are activities not clearly forbidden by Allah and mostly against the recommendations of the messenger such as letting the nails get too long. The fifth group consists of sins; these are behaviors forbidden and to be punished such as killing, robbery or drinking intoxicants. To do the positive and neutral activities appropriately and with the aim to get the pleasure of Allah and to refrain from doing bad deeds help us get nearer to Allah, the negative actions cause us get far from Allah.

⁹³ Or good works.

best friends. So if we all have the same God, and if He is Nearer to all of us even than our parents, then this truth makes us like brothers and sisters. So, if we are like brothers and sisters, then in terms of action, for example we have to help others when needed. We have to avoid harming others. Consequently, if I feed a hungry orphan, this is a good deed, because I and that person are the servants of the same Creator, who is nearer to each of us even than our parents. But, within the same logic, if we harm someone without a just reason, then this is a bad deed. These are just examples which show how we can determine a good deed or a bad deed.

Though good action can be broadly determined in such a manner, Allah states in the Quran, many good actions in different levels of detail. For instance, in one verse, Allah says:

And when you are greeted with a greeting, greet with a better greeting than it or return it; surely Allah takes account of all things.

(Quran: 4/86)

Or as we see in the following, to be kind toward each other and to refrain from violence are very important:

And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon the one whom between you and him is enmity will become as though he was a warm friend.

(Quran: 41/34)

And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord and a Paradise as wide as the heavens and earth, prepared for the righteous Who spend [in the cause of Allah] during ease and hardship and who restrain anger and are

forgiving toward mankind; and Allah loves the doers of good.

(Quran: 3/133-134)

All good deeds including the five pillars⁹⁴ of Islam are useful in many ways:

They represent our obedience to Allah and our servanthship to Him.

They produce objective data about whether a person really complies with the divine values or not; about whether a person is really good or not⁹⁵.

⁹⁴ In this context pillar means essential.

⁹⁵ All deeds do not have the same weight in indicating how good we are. One classification of the deeds may be as the ones directly related to Allah and the ones toward others. While all of the deeds are important, our deeds directly related to Allah are very special because of the very attributes of Allah. For example, imagine a person for whom his mother did lots of good things. Then when his mother asks a small thing from him he says that he does not recognize her. However, he claims to do lots of good things to others and to be a good person. Certainly his rejection of his mother is a worse deed when compared with his rejection of someone else, and renders meaningless his good deeds to others. But the billions of favors of the Creator cannot be compared with what the best mother can do for her child.

So any person who does not care about choosing to recognize his Creator and about anything that his Creator asks should reconsider how reliable are his good deeds as indicators of his goodness. And Allah knows best our intentions. As we see in the above example, our behavior directly regarding our Creator is the biggest indicator about who is good and who is evil. Because there is nobody other than Allah who gives so many huge favors; who deserves thanks, loyalty, love; who has knowledge, means, and authority to determine the good and the evil. His knowledge and witnessing is essential as to how good we are. Without His

They help us improve in parallel with the divine values: For example a person who continually thanks Allah, will improve in thankfulness, or a person who gives charity will improve in generosity.

They help us overcome our weaknesses which may exist in various respects: A person who may give thousands of dollars in the way of Allah, may be unable to give up eating for a certain period or vice versa. A person may be able to give up eating for Allah, but may have difficulties of arrogance in putting his forehead on the ground in order to worship Allah... When these persons perform the requirements of Islam, they will have achieved important steps for overcoming their weaknesses.

Good deeds help us improve in our love for Allah as well, as through good deeds we will undergo some difficulties for Him and we will feel that this love puts us into action.

They will be useful also in psychological, social, economic, environmental and other dimensions. We will give relevant examples in the following parts.

Our compliance with these requirements will also help us succeed in terms of the current life⁹⁶: For example a

authority, everyone may claim to be good for many reasons even though he is evil.

Therefore, can a person claim to be thankful while he has rejected his Creator who gave him huge favors? Can a person claim to be humble while he has rejected to bow down in front of his Creator? Can a person claim to be just while he has taken the favors of his Creator without paying back for them what He asked in return or without asking for forgiveness?

⁹⁶ Sometimes obeying Allah may be harmful for a certain person in the short term in worldly terms from a narrow perspective: For example because of saying the truth one may lose a profitable bid. However, essentially and in total obeying Allah will be always good in worldly terms as well.

businessman who cares about justice, will generally be more successful in his business; and in total this behavior will be good for many people. As we see in the following verse, Allah who is the Wise intends ease for us:

Allah intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship.
(Quran: 2/185)

Success in terms of this life may contribute to the successful performance of the requirements to get the pleasure of Allah: For example a strong Muslim in worldly terms may give more charities⁹⁷.

However, the biggest use of the good deeds will be their contribution to get the pleasure of Allah; and to reach His favors He prepared for His righteous servants.

5.2 THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

The overall requirements of Islam are very comprehensive and comprise lots of universally approved and required behaviors. We may mention example behaviors in this respect as being kind toward the parents, the neighbors, the environment; to work hard; to live according to the earlier mentioned values such as humility, truthfulness, kindness, justice; to avoid being jealous; to avoid wasting, to be clean, to invite to the truth and to good deeds. A Muslim has to comply with all these with the intention of getting the pleasure of Allah. It is very difficult for a Muslim to be successful

⁹⁷ However because of the unfulfilled responsibilities a strong person in worldly terms may also be inferior to a weak person in the sight of Allah. So, being rich or poor are not the ultimate factors to get the pleasure of Allah.

according to Islamic measures if he does not comply with these requirements.

As we see in the following verse, that which is useful for mankind is very important in this respect:

He sends down from the sky, rain, and valleys flow
according to their capacity,
And the torrent carries a rising foam.
And from that [ore] which they heat in the fire, desiring
adornments and utensils, is a foam like it.
Thus Allah presents [the example of] truth and
falsehood.
As for the foam, it vanishes, [being] cast off;
But as for that which benefits the people,
It remains on the earth.
Thus does Allah present examples.
(Quran: 13/17)

Among those requirements are also those that are specific to Islam and which have huge part and influence in the life of a practicing Muslim. The requirements specific to Islam contribute to a great extent to the implementation of the above mentioned fundamental requirements of Islam. On the other hand they are a very special part of obedience to Allah and serving Him.

The main requirements specific to Islam are emphasized in the Quran and they are publicly known as the five pillars of Islam. They are the testimony -statement of bearing witness to the unity of Allah and the messengership of Muhammad (Peace be upon him)-, the daily prayer, the regular charity, the fasting, and the pilgrimage. These are emphasized by Allah together with the other requirements. The following verse is an example in this respect:

Indeed, the Muslim men and Muslim women,
The believing men and believing women,
The obedient men and obedient women,
The truthful men and truthful women,
The patient men and patient women,
The humble men and humble women,
The charitable men and charitable women,
The fasting men and fasting women,
The men who guard their private parts and the women
who do so,
And the men who remember Allah often and the
women who do so
For them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great
reward.
(Quran: 33/35)

So in the following parts we will give some details
regarding those pillars' functions, conditions, methods,
benefits and their relationships with the other requirements:

5.2.1 STATEMENT OF BEARING WITNESS TO THE UNITY OF ALLAH

To Him ascends good speech,
And righteous work raises it.
(Quran: 35/10)

The first pillar of Islam is the testimony⁹⁸ to the unity
of Allah, and to the servanthship and messengership of Prophet
Muhammad (Peace be upon him). This is a statement that
contains a critical part of the truth and has the potential of

⁹⁸ In Arabic testimony is called "Shahadah", and it is
pronounced as follows: "ašhadu 'al-lā ilāha illā-llāh, wa 'ašhadu
'anna muḥammadan 'abduhu wa rasūluhu"

uniting the mankind around one truth. It is like this: “I bear witness that there is no god except Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His Servant and His Messenger.”

The statement “There is no god except Allah” (LA ILAHA ILLALLAH in the original Arabic text) is like a summary of all the Holy Books. This is also the first condition in order to get the pleasure of Allah, and entering paradise. Naturally a person would expect neither to get the pleasure of someone in whom he does not believe, nor to enter the paradise which is created by the Creator in whom he does not believe.

It is also a condition of being saved from the hell for those who have received the message of Allah:

And those who disbelieve and deny Our signs those will be companions of the Fire; they will abide therein eternally.

(Quran: 2/39)

Further explanations regarding the statement “There is no god other than Allah” exist in part 3.1.1.

The second part of the testimony makes reference to the last messenger of Allah who related the final message of Allah where everything is made clear. This aspect of the belief is required for someone who has known about Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him). Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) is a human being and a servant of Allah. He is not god, nor part of god. Allah has chosen him to relate his message to us. Also He has shown him as a good example for us.

If a person believes in the testimony then that person is considered as a Muslim. This is between Allah and the relevant person. In Islam there is no baptism. There is nobody

other than Allah who may accept one's submission to Allah. Once one declares this testimony openly then naturally he will also be considered as a Muslim by the Muslim society.

Accepting the testimony is like the signature of a contract between Allah and the person who accepts Islam. With this contract the person chooses to be entitled to the paradise and get the pleasure of his/her Lord against complying with the divine rules and values.

It is also the recognition of His Lord by the servant. The recognition of Allah makes a big difference in thinking and in practice. By recognizing his Lord, the servant recognizes himself as well. Without such a recognition and link to the Eternal, an individual is like nothing in this immense universe and time frame. For example, probably nobody will remember him some centuries after he died, and even if he is remembered, this remembrance will not benefit him. And nobody knew him even only one year before he was born. Thus, from the perspective of a person who does not recognize his Creator, he is like nothing.

5.2.2 DAILY PRAYERS

And establish prayer and give [obligatory] charity, and whatever good you put forward for yourselves you will find it with Allah. Indeed, Allah of what you do, is Seeing.

(Quran: 2/110)

The second pillar of Islam is the daily prayer⁹⁹. There

⁹⁹ We use the term daily prayer (salah) in a meaning different than supplication (duaa). The daily prayer contains some supplications, but it is more than these supplications. A Muslim may

are five daily prayers in Islam. Each of these takes around 10 minutes and they are performed in time brackets. For example, suppose that noon prayer start time is at 13.00 and afternoon prayer start time is at 17.00, then one has to perform the noon prayer between 13.00 and 17.00¹⁰⁰. Otherwise it is considered as a sin. Daily prayers can be performed not only in the mosques but everywhere which is clean¹⁰¹.

Daily prayers consist of obligatory parts and additional parts. Additional parts are essentially according to the practice of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him). These parts are similar and they consist of units which consist of subunits as standing, bowing-down, prostration. Daily prayers start with the intention¹⁰² and then the statement “Allah is the Biggest¹⁰³ (this means biggest in His powers, knowledge, help and so on)”, and in each transition generally this is restated. When standing, the first chapter of the Quran called “The Opening” is recited, this chapter is a special supplication given to us by Allah. This chapter is as follows:

perform additional prayers very similar to daily prayers that we explain in this part. All of them are useful in similar ways.

¹⁰⁰ The ending time of a prayer is not always the starting time of the next prayer. It is better to perform these prayers in the early parts of the relevant time brackets.

¹⁰¹ The cleanness is very important in Islam. This is why we remove our shoes when we enter the mosques. Another reason for the removal of shoes in the mosques is the respect for the mosques which are special as they are essentially for the remembrance of Allah.

¹⁰² In all prayers intention is important. Just before the daily prayers the intention is articulated by the one who prays.

The prayer must be only in order to get the pleasure of Allah. Otherwise, it may even form a serious sin, as a prayer done for show.

¹⁰³“Allahu Akbar” in Arabic. This is called “Takbeer”.

In¹⁰⁴ the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.
Praise¹⁰⁵ [and thanks] is (due) to Allah, Lord of the
worlds.

The Beneficent, the Merciful.

Master of the Day of Judgment.

It is You we worship and You we ask for help.

Guide us to the right path,

The path of those upon whom You have bestowed
favours, not of those upon whom is anger nor of those
who are astray.

(Quran: 1/1-7)

Praying like this is a full communication between us
and Allah, in that while we recite it, in one way we listen to
what Allah says, and in the other Allah listens to what we say
as a supplication. And after this, some more verses are recited.
In the next parts, statements of thanking, asking for help,
praising are recited.

Daily prayers are performed partly individually and
partly in congregation.

The men are strongly recommended to pray the
obligatory parts of the daily prayers in congregation. The
women do not have such a requirement¹⁰⁶, but they can choose

¹⁰⁴ More literally "With"

¹⁰⁵ The corresponding word "Hamd" in the original text has
the meanings of both praise and thank.

¹⁰⁶ This is mainly due to practical reasons; for example there
may be security problems in some places where it may not be safe
for a woman to walk to the mosque in darkness before sun rise or
early in the night. Or a mother may not be able to leave her child
and go to the mosque. So the women may perform their daily
prayers at home or in their offices. Therefore in mosques there is
generally less space for ladies. For similar reasons the imams are of
men.

to participate in prayers done together. If two or more men are together while it is time for prayer, they should choose one of them as “Imam”¹⁰⁷. Imam means leader. It is important that the imam is one of them who knows best the recitation of the Quran and religious knowledge. Imam prays in the front, facing Kaba as others. The others pray in lines behind him. Kaba is the central Mosque in Mecca/Saudi Arabia. The imam says aloud the transition words first and passes to the next part of the prayer and others follow him¹⁰⁸ in harmony.

Orderliness is very important in the prayers performed together. In one way this reflects the harmony in the universe: Remember how orderly each wave from one’s laptop reaches another laptop on the other side of the earth as Allah willed.

Men and women generally pray in separate places in

¹⁰⁷ For practical reasons, in many mosques there are permanent imams assigned by government who are also directly or indirectly responsible for the maintenance, cleaning, security... of the mosques. To be assigned as a permanent imam they undergo some exams. They are like everybody else, and they cannot claim any privileges in the sight of Allah, they are not intermediaries between any individual and Allah. For example if an imam is not present in his mosque for a certain reason, someone else who knows how to pray may replace him.

The place where the imam prays in the front is called the “Mihrab”; the high place to the right of the mihrab, generally with stairs where he gives sermons for Friday prayers is called the “Mimbar”. The place where the muazzins (callers to prayer) call to prayer inside the mosque is called “Muazzin’s Mahfil”. All of these are used for practical reasons.

¹⁰⁸ What the imam does differently than others is essentially the additional intent to lead the prayer and saying the transition statements as “Allah is the Greatest” aloud so that everybody may hear them and may pray together in harmony and order.

the mosques¹⁰⁹. Except for the Friday prayer, the prayers can be performed wholly individually as well. When we pray in congregation, we feel that though we are many, our Lord is One. When we pray individually, we feel more our one to one relationship with Allah.

The daily prayers are useful in many respects:

- Thanks to the daily prayers we remember Allah as it is emphasized in the following verse:

Indeed, I am Allah. There is no deity except Me. so worship Me and establish prayer for My remembrance.
(Quran: 20/14)

In Islam it is important to have a strong consciousness about the nearness of Allah. So the remembrance of Allah is very important. It is not sufficient to remember Allah once a day, or once a week or once a month. To allocate certain time to only Allah five times a day helps us improve our feelings of nearness and love for Allah. And as Allah is not represented or imagined as a human being or as a statute or as another object, and as He is not limited with space or time, in prayers a Muslim does not have any feelings of distance between himself and Allah. These facts allow for feelings of nearness as we see in the following verse:

And We have already created man and know what his soul whispers to him, and We are closer to him than [his] jugular vein.
(Quran: 50/16)

The remembrance of Allah changes fundamentally for

¹⁰⁹ This is to facilitate the concentration in Allah and to prevent the potential distraction because of the feelings toward the other gender.

better how we look at life, at the world. It makes us positive. We can explain this by the following example: Firstly suppose that you have bought a pen, and secondly suppose that an identical pen was given to you as a gift by someone who is very special for you. Probably the pen in the second situation makes you much happier even though the first pen also has the same physical functionalities. Because the pen in the second situation is not only a pen, but also the representative of the attention, love and good will of that special person toward you.

Like this, when we do our daily prayers, and remember Allah often, everything becomes much more meaningful, valuable and beautiful. For example, our eyes make us see, but also and more importantly, they show the attention and the mercy of Allah, of the All-Powerful, of our Creator for us. For the same reason, if we remember Allah often, the sun, the moon, the air, the water, our families, friends... become much more meaningful and beautiful. Again, thanks to this remembrance, we perceive and remember that they form a whole in harmony and solidarity under one unity, wisdom and control; and thus their beauties are even more enhanced for us. Also, thanks to this remembrance and love of Allah we continually exercise our feelings of love, and this will help us to have stronger positive feelings toward everything. Likewise, we can be hopeful for the continuity of all these beauties by the help and power of the All-Powerful and Eternal Allah.

- The daily prayers are reminders of the divine values. Thanks to the daily prayers we improve ourselves in becoming a better person: Knowing that one is observed by his/her Creator who is Beneficent and Merciful, will help one to be better and better, and to refrain from doing bad deeds. We see a reference to this fact in the following verse:

Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing,
and the remembrance of Allah is greater.

(Quran: 29/45)

- In daily prayers we thank Allah, and improve ourselves in becoming thankful, and not ungrateful. These are important values emphasized in the Quran:

Nay! but serve Allah alone and be of the thankful.

(Quran: 39/66)

Be careful of (your duty to) Allah then, that you may give thanks.

(Quran: 3/123)

And be thankful to Me; and be you not ungrateful towards Me.

(Quran: 2/152)

- In daily prayers we put our forehead on the ground. In Islam one of the biggest sins is arrogance. We have to be humble both toward Allah and toward His servants. When we bow down and we prostrate in the daily prayers, we state that there is a power bigger than us; we confirm that we are not above all; we state that we are equal with others in being subject to our Lord above all. This way we try to improve ourselves in becoming humble as underlined in the following:

And seek help in patience and prayer.

And it is hard, except to the humble ones.

(Quran: 2/45)

- As mentioned also in the above verse, in daily prayers we ask help from Allah. Asking for the help of Allah is a key requirement in Islam as explained in the relevant parts of this

book.

- In the daily prayers, the servant gets nearest to his Creator. It is a continual meeting of the servant who loves his Creator with His Creator who loves his servant.

In Islam, we pray to Allah with all our existence. In the daily prayers, we pray not only with our mind, but also with our spirit and body, with all our muscles, cells. We stand, we bow down, we prostrate, and we sit with the consciousness of being under His presence. We ask Him for help, we recite the Quran. We remember His Mercy upon us, we feel His Nearness.

- Thanks to daily prayers, people get acquainted, and they know about others' happy or bad developments.
- Daily prayers contribute to our health as well. One who prays washes his/her hands, face, arms, and feet before the prayers. These are useful for hygiene. Movements in the prayer form perfect periodic exercises and are also useful for health.
- Daily prayers help us improve in steadfastness, sympathy for human beings, time awareness and discipline.

Daily prayers are useful in many other ways. But the most important consequence of the daily prayer is the feeling and knowledge of the fact that the Creator of all is with us wherever we are.

5.2.3 REGULAR CHARITY

O you who have believed, spend from that which We have provided for you before there comes a Day in

which there is no exchange and no friendship and no intercession.

And the disbelievers they are the wrongdoers.

(Quran: 2/254)

The beneficence, generosity, and mercifulness are important divine values. Therefore Allah recommends us to be generous, gracious and merciful. And Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) who gave almost whatever he had to the needy and in the way of Allah has been a great example in this respect.

Caring about others and the society is very essential in Islam, as everything is the creation and servant of Allah.

And as emphasized in the following verse, the good of the human beings is valuable, and to work for it will produce permanent and positive consequences:

Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and earth, and the alternation of the night and the day, and the [great] ships which sail through the sea with that which benefits people, and what Allah has sent down from the heavens of rain, giving life thereby to the earth after its lifelessness and dispersing therein every [kind of] moving creature, and [His] directing of the winds and the clouds controlled between the heaven and the earth are signs for a people who use reason.

(Quran: 2/164)

Accordingly, the third pillar of Islam is the regular charity. In Islam, we pray Allah with all our existence. The regular charity is a prayer done with our wealth. The priority we give to Allah must be higher than the priority we give to money.

Every Muslim has to give one fortieth of his/her

qualified wealth after the basic needs to the needy. This again relates to the Unity of Allah which brings together all His creation as if they are brothers and sisters. This fact and the consequent approach of caring for others underlie the charity. In addition to the mandatory charity, we are also recommended to give more if we have the means.

On the other hand, Allah says:

You will not attain the good (reward) until you spend
[in the way of Allah] from that which you love.
(Quran: 3/92)

Therefore if we think only about ourselves, we cannot be good.

Also in Islam the balance is important. As said in the Quran:

And the sky He has uplifted; and He has established the
balance,
That you not transgress within the balance.
(Quran: 55/7-8)

So we have to advance toward balance within our own selves, within the society and between us and Allah.

If we always say “To me, to me” we cannot reach this balance, we cannot reach happiness. But if we give for Allah without expecting any worldly return, we can approach a balance within our souls, within the society and between us and Allah.

Because, in this way, we will not be saying only “To me, to me”; but also “To me and from me to those who are in need”. So this will help the balance within us. Again behaving this way will help us in controlling our greed for wealth. And

this way we can better empathize with the society.

Regarding the society, through obligatory charity, those who are able will have given to those who are in need. This way the gap between the rich and the poor will be reduced and we will have advanced toward the balance in society. The following verses are relevant in this respect:

And those within whose wealth is a known right
For the petitioner and the deprived
(Quran: 70/24-25)

And in their properties there is the right of the [needy]
petitioner and the deprived.
(Quran: 51/19)

The previous verses reflect a level of society which is so high that it is very difficult if not impossible to be reached by human-made ideologies or systems. This is because the rich and the poor consider themselves from a human perspective as different parties and they cannot be impartial. Even if it is recognized by the rich that the poor has certain rights in his wealth, this will be seen probably like a favor of the rich to the poor. If the poor struggles to get a right from the wealth of the rich, this will cause conflicts. But Allah is the ultimate Owner and the one who gives to some and who does not give to some the wealth and its means. And He empowers and recommends the human beings to establish peace and balance. Thus only His impartial declaration and recognition of the right of the poor in the wealth of the rich may be valid and conclusive. Thus with the cooperation and compliance with Allah, the poor will not feel inferior to the rich, and the rich will not feel arrogant when the wealth is shared. Only through this balanced understanding and the relevant procedures we can reduce conflicts and pains of

millions¹¹⁰ among mankind.

Balance is also important regarding our relationship with Allah. Allah gives us billions of His favors each second. In return for all these favors, and to show our gratitude we also should feel the need to give something to Him. But He is the Rich and He does not need anything. Therefore, we can give to his servants to show our gratitude. And whatever we give in His way, will never equal His favors. Although we cannot fully pay for what He gives us and reach balance in this way, by giving in His way whatever we can we will have shown Him our gratitude. And by His mercy He may accept what we give.

Thus, by giving charity, we may be in harmony with some divine values. Also, this way we will have advanced toward the balance and peace within ourselves, within the society and within the relationship between us and Allah. Again, this way we will have more control over our short term desires and weaknesses regarding money or wealth. Furthermore, this way we may test ourselves to see what we are in fact.

¹¹⁰ The excessive love for the temporary and the omission of the eternal causes the present unjust situation on the earth. Also the arrogance of excessively owning things that do not originate from us is an additional factor for the present situation as seen in the example of a sinner whose words are quoted in the Quran:

He said, "I was only given it because of knowledge I have".
(Quran: 28/78)

However, the truth is different as mentioned in the following verse:

"And Allah has created you and what you make."
(Quran: 37/96)

5.2.4 FASTING

The month of Ramadan is that in which the Quran was descended, a guidance to men and clear proofs of the guidance and the distinction;

Therefore whoever of you is present in the month, he shall fast therein,

And whoever is ill or upon a journey shall fast a similar number of days later on.

Allah desires ease for you, and He does not desire for you difficulty,

And (He desires) that you should complete the number and that you should exalt the greatness of Allah for His having guided you, and that you may give thanks.

(Quran: 2/185)

The fourth pillar is fasting. A Muslim has to fast during the month of Ramadan which is also called the month of sharing¹¹¹. This is a month according to the lunar calendar.

According to Islam, fasting consists of not eating, nor drinking, nor having sexual intercourse during the daytime and doing good deeds more and being extremely careful in refraining from bad behaviors.

Some of the important outcomes of fasting are as follows:

Firstly, by fasting, we give the first priority to Allah, and we improve and state our love and respect for Allah. This way we try to get the pleasure of Allah. Fasting is very important in that it directly and concretely relates to oneself. For example when one gives charity, his living standard may

¹¹¹ A Muslim is recommended to fast outside Ramadan as well. But this is not obligatory.

remain the same; however when he fasts, he feels within himself what he does for Allah. When we fast, we do not eat even though we can have a delicious lunch, even though we are hungry, just because Allah wanted us to fast and to reach His pleasure. Real love requires the lover to be ready to undergo difficulties for the one he loves. By fasting, we give something from us for Allah and we feel that nothing is more important than Allah.

Secondly, by fasting, we share and feel the feelings of the needy people. There are hundreds of millions of people on the earth who cannot eat or drink as required by the health standards. If we know them, it is good, but we also have to share their feelings so that we can get into quicker action in order to establish a world with less inequality. Allah has empowered and recommended us to establish peace and equality, and He has given us the opportunity to cooperate with Him in this respect as mentioned in the following verses:

And [mention, O Muhammad], when your Lord said to the angels, "Indeed, I will make upon the earth a viceroy¹¹²."

(Quran: 2/30)

And Allah has favored some of you over others in provision. But those who were favored would not hand over their provision to those whom their right hands possess so they would be equal to them therein. Then is it the favor of Allah they reject?

(Quran: 16/71)

Thirdly, by fasting we understand better how limited we are in appreciating the favors of Allah. When we can eat

¹¹² A person near the king and authorized by the king with important authorities.

whatever we want and when we can drink whatever we want, the food and the water become very usual for us and we cannot appreciate their importance. But when we eat and drink in the evenings of Ramadan after the daytimes in which we neither eat nor drink anything, the same food and the same water taste much better than other times. Also in the days when we fast, we feel as we never felt in other times that if we were not able to eat or drink for a few days, we would have health problems or maybe we would die. By fasting we experience how big the provisions and favors of Allah are.

Similarly, we see, we hear, we breathe but we generally do not feel appropriately how important these are, and we do not appreciate those favors of our Lord sufficiently. However, if we could not breathe for some minutes, we would give all our wealth to breathe. So thanks to what feel by fasting we can make such an analogy and we may understand and we may feel how limited we are in appreciating the favors of Allah, and how hard we have to try to thank Him.

And all these thoughts and feelings come together with the praises and thanks for Allah in the additional prayers specific to the month of Ramadan; so the love of the Muslim for Allah and the feelings of goodness reach their highest levels in Ramadan.

In Ramadan, people generally dine together with friends, neighbors, relatives. And in the end of Ramadan, there are celebration and thanksgiving prayers done in congregation, and people visit each other in the celebration days. The poor are generally given charities in Ramadan. So, the feelings of gratitude are multiplied this way. Therefore, fasting produces many huge personal and social positive consequences as well.

Furthermore, when we fast, our body takes a break for a period, which is useful for health.

5.2.5 PILGRIMAGE

And [mention, O Muhammad],
When We designated for Abraham the site of the
House,
[saying],
Do not associate anything with Me
And purify My House for those walking around it
And those who stand [in prayer]
And those who bow and prostrate
And proclaim to the people the pilgrimage;
They will come to you on foot and on every lean camel;
They will come from every distant pass
That they may witness benefits for themselves
And mention the name of Allah on known days over
the cattle which He has provided for them.
So eat of them and feed the miserable and poor.
(Quran: 22/ 26-28)

The fifth pillar of Islam is the pilgrimage. A Muslim who has the means has to perform the pilgrimage at least once in his life. The pilgrimage consists of a visit to the Holy Mosque in Mecca/Saudi Arabia and some prayers¹¹³ in it and

¹¹³ One of these prayers is the sacrifice of certain kinds of animals. With the sacrifice, we witness the favors of Allah to us from a different perspective. In normal times we eat meat or plants but we may fail to feel that some living creatures lose their lives for us. Through sacrifice we feel these feelings. Again by sacrifice, we witness that one day we will also lose our present lives. Also we see that we should not be arrogant and that our worldly side is temporary as we see for example in the worldly side of the lambs. On the other hand, we witness that what we eat, what we drink and their consequences in our body will come to an end and that they have little importance in the sight of Allah. In the following verse there is a reference to this:

in specific places in its surroundings.

In Mecca, there are reminders that remind us of the strong relationships between Allah and some of His servants. The remembrance of these relationships is very helpful in improving our consciousness about Allah.

Many of the reminders there remind us of Prophet Abraham (Peace be upon him) and his family.

Prophet Abraham (Peace be upon him) lived thousands of years ago. Even when he was young, he declared the unity of Allah and broke the idols his people worshipped. Upon this the rulers of his country decided to kill him by throwing him into a huge fire. Abraham (Peace be upon him) did not change his way, he did not negotiate anything with Allah nor with those who wanted to kill him, and he trusted in Allah. The rulers founded a catapult, and they burnt a huge fire and they threw him in it. By the favor of Allah, the fire turned into a pool. And Prophet Abraham (Peace be upon him) was saved. This very catapult and this very pool are in Şanlıurfa/Türkiye and open to visit.

Later he went with his wife and his little son to Mecca where nobody was living at that time. They went there and he had to leave them there. He supplicated to Allah that He would protect his family. And his wife submitted to Allah and she stayed there with her child. Abraham (Peace be upon him) left and she was alone with her child. They had all fully trusted in Allah. For a while she searched for water between

Their meat will not reach Allah, nor will their blood, but what reaches Him is piety from you. Thus have We subjected them to you that you may glorify Allah for that to which He has guided you; and give good tidings to the doers of good.
(Quran: 22/37)

the hills Safa and Marwa. Then when she came near the child, she saw that from the sands near her son Ishmael (Peace be upon him) appeared some water. That water was a reward for their trust in Allah and a response to their supplications. That water is served today in abundance to millions of pilgrims. The pilgrims drink from that water and bring it to their home countries as well. The hills Safa and Marwa are also visited by the pilgrims.

Later, Abraham (Peace be upon him) who came back to Mecca founded Kaba, Holy Mosque in Mecca, with his son Ishmael (Peace be upon him). That Mosque is a central place for Islam. Every Muslim in the world while performing the daily prayers faces this Mosque; one reason for this central place is to facilitate the orderliness of the prayers. Allah is not limited by space or location as explained in the metaphor in the following verse:

And to Allah belongs the east and the west. So wherever you [might] turn, there is the Face of Allah. Indeed, Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.
(Quran: 2/115)

In Mecca there are many other reminders that remind us of the trust of Abraham (Peace be upon him) and his family in Allah, and His love and bounties to them. We see in them the example of the pure and sincere relationship between Allah and His servants. Because there was nobody to whom Abraham (Peace be upon him) and his family would show or demonstrate anything; and there was nobody other than Allah whom they might ask for help.

Another subject we remember in pilgrimage is the efforts of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) and his friends to get the pleasure of Allah and to deliver His message. These efforts were successful with the help of Allah.

Thousands of years after Prophet Abraham (Peace be upon him), Mecca became populated. But these people were generally polytheists. And in such an environment Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) came to life in A.D. 571¹¹⁴. And in him and his friends we see the example of the strong relationship between Allah and His servants in many dimensions. In every location we visit during pilgrimage there are things to remember in this respect.

Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) was born in an environment within difficult conditions. He had lost his father even before he was born, and he lost his mother when he was 6 years old. He did not go to any school; he knew neither writing nor reading. But he was a person of very high morals. Even before messengership came, He was nicknamed as Trustworthy.

At the age of forty, he received the first revelations from Allah through the Revelation Angel Gabriel (Peace be upon him), in a cave on a mountain. With the shocking impact of the first revelations he went home trembling and feeling very cold. He said to his wife “cover me, cover me!” and his wife covered him. He said to his wife that he was afraid. She replied: “Allah will never disgrace you. You keep good relations with your Kith and kin; you bear the burden of the weak; you help the poor and the needy; you entertain the guests and endure hardships in the path of truthfulness”.

When the impact of the first revelation was over, he told her what happened. And his wife took him to a Christian knowledgeable person. He told him what happened. The Christian person said that this was the same spirit that came to Moses (Peace be upon him), and he would like to live up to the time when his people would turn him out and to help him.

¹¹⁴ Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) died in 632 A.D. in Medina/Saudi Arabia and his tomb is there.

Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) asked whether his people would turn him out. He said yes, and that anyone who came with something similar to what he brings had been treated with hostility; and that if he would be alive till that day, then he would support him strongly.

Indeed it was a tremendous task. Imagine 1400 years ago, the middle of the desert, people worship idols, where there is no efficient law, no reliable law enforcement. And you bring and try to spread a message which is totally against the beliefs, the behaviors, the economic order, and the politics of your community. This is almost equal to committing suicide. However, Allah had told him that he would protect him from mankind. And indeed, we see that though Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) was on duty in the weakest and most difficult stage of Islam, he died a natural death. But for example, some of the following leaders after Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) were killed.

In the revelations he was required to declare the unity of Allah to mankind.

The disbelievers did not care much in the very beginning. But the verses were very strong, they were stating that the gods that his people worshipped were not able to see, to hear, to create, to do any good or bad. But the politics, the rules, the economy of that time were all based on polytheism.

Then, the leaders of Mecca started to look for ways to stop him. They offered him money, they offered him to marry him with the most beautiful women of that time, and they offered him some leadership in return for changing or stopping the declaration of the revelation. But Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) said that he could not change, or stop the delivery of the message as he believed that it was from Allah.

Upon that, the leaders of his community and other

disbelievers started to use force to stop Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) and his friends. They tortured, they boycotted, they insulted, they killed, and they did whatever they could to stop Islam.

At a certain stage, Allah allowed the Muslims to emigrate from Mecca to Medina, which is a city nearly 500 km away from Mecca. Most Muslims emigrated, and afterwards, making sure that they had emigrated safely Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) also emigrated with one of his friends. Imagine that they both travelled through the desert 1400 years ago, behind them people strongly willing to kill them. Big rewards were offered for whoever would bring him dead or alive. But each time they were about to kill him, he was saved miraculously, in accordance with the guarantee of Allah.

In Medina also the believers were attacked by the disbelievers many times. But Islam grew there with speed. Among those who accepted Islam were many Jews and Christians who expected an important messenger to come from that region and who saw the signs of his messengership, the way shown by Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) and many miracles. Some years later, the Muslims outnumbered the disbelievers in Mecca, and Muslims conquered Mecca in the leadership of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him), without facing any resistance as there was big difference between their powers. And Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) forgave the disbelievers, who tortured, insulted, tried to kill him and his friends, and who raided their properties.

Islam spread quickly, and Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) and his friends had a high name in the history and at present. They trusted in Allah, and they got the biggest success, as did Abraham (Peace be upon him).

So in pilgrimage, we see the reminders of all those as well.

One of the most interesting things about the pilgrimage is the stay in Arafat. Nearly 25 km away from Mecca is a place called Arafat. It is an open area in the desert without any buildings. That place is believed to be the place where Adam and Eve (Peace be upon them) met for the first time on this earth. Now, each year, on a certain day 4 or 5 million people come together in that place; black, white, poor, rich, old, young...; all kind of people.

Think about it, the grand-grand-grand... children of the very first man and woman meeting where their very first parents met. And it is difficult there to distinguish the rich from the poor; the boss from the worker... Every man wears white towels, every woman wears simple clothes, everybody stays under simple tents. There is nothing even close to this event in this world as an example of human brotherhood and sisterhood.

Mostly the experience of pilgrimage leaves unforgettable and unmatched impressions and feelings on the pilgrim for the rest of his life. According to my experience nowhere else one may feel human brotherhood and sisterhood as in pilgrimage.

So above, we have summarized the five pillars of Islam: The testimony, the daily prayer, the regular charity, the fasting, the pilgrimage.

6 THE MEANS TOWARD SUCCESS

A person who is careful and thankful will look for the source of the billions of favors given us and the reasons for

them¹¹⁵. Then he will find out the people who invite to the Creator and His Mercy, namely the messengers of Allah as Abraham, Moses, Jesus-Christ, Muhammad... (Peace be upon them). And he will listen to their messages. In the following verse there are relevant statements of some believers:

“Our Lord, indeed we have heard a caller calling to faith, [saying],
‘Believe in your Lord,’ and we have believed.
Our Lord, so forgive us our sins and remove from us our misdeeds and cause us to die with the righteous.”
(Quran: 3/193)

And then he will make a “choice” to follow the messengers or not. Thus he may enter the path of Islam and believe in the essentials of the truth. Consequently, with the guidance given by Allah he will be required to do good deeds so that he may improve further regarding the values required by Allah. The more he improves in these values the more he

¹¹⁵ There are many people who say that they are not interested in why what we experience happens. They say that they are interested only in “how” things happen. However, this may be risky in certain ways: Imagine one day you wake up and you see in front of your door a luxurious car, with keys and a license in your name, and a note that this car is yours. If you are interested only in knowing how to drive it or how it came there, and not interested in why it was yours, what are the reasons, the future consequences of receiving it, you may face a bad situation. Maybe the person who gave it loves you very much, but maybe the person who gave it to you will ask something in return; or maybe the car was stolen and maybe the person who gave it intends to cause troubles for you. In any case a thankful person will try to find out the one who gave it at least in order to thank for it. So in any case it is necessary to try to find out why what we observe happens and where do all these favors come from, and what may be the relevant expected consequences.

will feel the nearness of Allah, the more Allah will be pleased with him; and Allah will make him pleased with His favors He prepared for His righteous servants. So he/she will reach true and permanent satisfaction in this world and in the hereafter.

So, in order to proceed toward this goal, one needs to care for these values, to believe in His Lord and the truth, and do good deeds. All of those are considered under the concept of “serving Allah” mentioned in the following verses:

You (alone) we serve; You (alone) we ask for help.
(Quran: 1/5)

And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to serve Me.
(Quran: 51/56)

And as a consequence of these one can reach the divine love as mentioned in the following verse:

Those who believe and do good deeds,
For them the Beneficent will surely bring about love.
(Quran: 19/96)

And to achieve these, one needs a healthy logic, a strong character, the help of Allah, perseverance to spend the necessary efforts, our faculties as seeing and hearing, the obvious facts that we observe, the messages of our Creator, and our pure initial codes. These will be explained in the following. Without using these to a certain extent one cannot be successful. We have to know them so that we may determine whether we benefit from them effectively. That is one of the reasons why Allah makes reference to these in many verses in the Quran.

6.1 LOGIC

(O Muhammad), say,
“This is my way. I and my followers invite to Allah
with proper understanding.
Allah is most Glorious.
And I am not of those who associate others with Him.”
(Quran: 12/108)

A strong logic will lead to Allah. However, the logic is under the influence of certain qualifications. A strong logic requires being free from prejudices, it requires sound knowledge, sound character, efforts for reasoning, careful observation and caring about the truth. The following are examples from the Quran where Allah makes reference to some of these elements:

[This is] a revelation from the Beneficent, the Merciful.
A Book whose verses have been detailed, an Arabic Quran for a people who know,
As a giver of good tidings and a warner; but most of them turn away, so they do not hear.
And they say, “Our hearts are within coverings from that to which you invite us, and in our ears is deafness, and between us and you is a partition, so work; indeed, we are working.”
(Quran: 41/2-5)

The arrogant leaders from his nation asked the oppressed among them who have believed: “Do you really believe that Saleh is a Messenger from his Lord?” They replied: “We do indeed believe in the revelation with which he has been sent.”

Those who were arrogant said: “Surely we are disbelievers in that which you believe.”

(Quran: 7/75-76)

Is He [not best] who responds to the desperate one when he calls upon Him and removes evil and makes you inheritors of the earth? Is there a deity with Allah? Little do they reflect!

(Quran: 27/62)

In the other parts of this book, we explained the way and examples of reasoning according to the Quran.

6.2 SOUND CHARACTER

The Day when there will not benefit [anyone] wealth or children,

Except for him who comes to Allah with a pure heart,
(Quran: 26/88-89)

And indeed, (O Muhammad) you are of a great moral character.

(Quran: 68/4)

There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and who remembers Allah often.

(Quran: 33:21)

Each person will make a choice regarding belief. This choice will also reflect each person's personality:

This world is designed so that one is not forced to

believe or disbelieve. As we see in the following verses, belief in the unseen is required:

This is the Book about which there is no doubt,
Guidance for the righteous,
Who believe in the unseen, establish prayer, and spend
out of what We have provided for them,
(Quran: 2/2-3)

As we see in the following verse, had Allah willed, He could have made everyone member of just one homogeneous community:

Had Allah willed, He would have made you one nation
[united in religion], but [He intended] to test you in
what He has given you; so race to [all that is] good. To
Allah is your return all together, and He will then
inform you concerning that over which you used to
differ.
(Quran: 5/48)

But our environment with the visible and the unseen and our disability to grasp and see the unseen enables each person to shape his/her belief or disbelief according to his character and values along with his/her logic. This way we are led objectively only with who and what we are, without being forced. For example, thankfulness is not in harmony with benefiting from all the favors in this universe and then not thinking about where all this come from. And a person who really cares for thankfulness will have difficulty in not thanking for all these favors. And if he does not thank, he will

probably feel unhappy¹¹⁶. So our logics are naturally under the pressures of our personalities¹¹⁷.

Therefore, in Islam, the freedom to choose one's own belief is very essential. There are clear references to this in the following verses:

There shall be no compulsion in the religion.
The right course has become clear from the wrong.
So whoever rejects evil and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it.
And Allah is Hearing and Knowing.
(Quran: 2/256)

Indeed, We guided him to the way, be he grateful or be he ungrateful.
(Quran: 76/3)

And say, "The truth is from your Lord, so whoever wills let him believe; and whoever wills let him disbelieve."

¹¹⁶ The relationship between character and belief does not mean that whoever says he believes fully has the necessary character. This is so because firstly Islam is also a journey in which we improve our characters; secondly the character is just one of the factors that lead to belief.

¹¹⁷ Additionally for example, the comfort of disbelief in someone who is superior may lead a person who loves the present excessively to reject an all-knower God. No responsibility, no accountability, no obligation for prayers, no restrictions in enjoying the present life, wherefore the desire to fully enjoy this worldly life may be important motives to reject a wise superior power from whom one would fear, because of whom one would feel responsible. So every person may be under the influence of such elements of his character.

(Quran: 18/29)

Say, “O mankind, the truth has come to you from your Lord, so whoever is guided is only guided for [the benefit of] his soul, and whoever goes astray only goes astray [in violation] against it. And I am not over you a manager.”

(Quran: 10/108)

In many circumstances, a disbeliever would not believe even if he saw apparent miracles; unless he is forced to believe. But if one is forced to believe, this would be neither a real belief, nor a sincere recognition of the truth. Again the past also has shown that even if there are apparent miracles, a person will not believe if he is not apt in his personality to believe or to be accepted by Allah¹¹⁸. The following verse indicates this:

And even if We had sent down to them the angels [with the message] and the dead spoke to them [of it] and We gathered together every [created] thing in front of them, they would not believe unless Allah should will. But most of them, [of that], are ignorant.

(Quran: 6/111)

Miracles would increase the responsibility of the people, while not affecting much their belief.

¹¹⁸ Therefore, the objective distinction of good and evil in this world, requires a person to be invited to believe without being forced by seeing or by other means, so that his/her personality may be correctly reflected in his consequent belief/disbelief.

6.3 THE HELP OF ALLAH

Is not Allah sufficient for His Servant?
(Quran: 39/36)

“And my success is not but through Allah.
Upon him I have relied, and to Him I return.”
(Quran: 11/88)

But Allah is your protector,
And He is the best of helpers.
(Quran: 3/150)

The help of Allah is important for both believers and disbelievers. The believers need it so that their belief is a real belief, that they may keep it, that it may be acceptable by Allah, and that they may do good deeds that are acceptable by Allah. And the disbelievers need it so that they may be guided to the path of Islam. And in order to invoke the help of Allah, they both have to have certain universal and divine values which are required by Allah.

As we see in the following verse, good deeds help us invoke the mercy of Allah:

Indeed, the mercy of Allah is near to the doers of good.
(Quran: 7/56)

As a human being our goal and responsibility is big. But we have weaknesses. For example our knowledge is limited: One may know something for decades in a certain way and then perceive that it was clearly wrong. Then, how can we hope for being successful in terms of belief and good deeds? On the other hand, whatever we do for Allah, we cannot pay for His favors which are too many and too big.

However hard we try to do our best, we may make mistakes, and there is always a risk of being unsuccessful and the consequences of the failure are big. Therefore we have to manage that risk well. How do we manage it?

The essential way to be successful in terms of belief and good deeds and to manage the risk mentioned above is to trust in the Mercy of Allah, to ask for His help, and to follow His guidelines. With His help our good intentions and sincerity for Allah may improve and may be acceptable.

Allah teaches us in the following verse, that a major obstacle that may prevent us from asking for His help is our arrogance and that we need humility so that we may suitably ask for His help:

And seek help through patience and prayer, and indeed, it is difficult except for the humbly submissive [to Allah].

(Quran: 2/45)

In the very beginning of the Quran there is a chapter called the “Opening”. This chapter is a special prayer given to us by Allah. In the middle of this chapter there is this verse:

“You we serve and you we ask for help.”

(Quran: 1/5)

This chapter, and therefore this verse has to be recited many times every day by the Muslims, even by the most knowledgeable. So it is crucial to ask for the help of Allah during all our life.

Once Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) told his friends that no one’s deeds alone will ever make him enter Paradise. They said, “Not even you, O Messenger of Allah?” He said, “No, not even me, unless Allah showers me with His

Mercy. So try to be near to perfection. And no one should wish for death; he is either doing good deeds so he will do more of that, or he is doing wrong so he may repent.”¹¹⁹

Asking for the help of Allah is very inherent to us, it is very natural, and it is very logical. Suppose you have been locked in a place where there is no food, no drink, and no light. You need to get out urgently, but you do not know whether there is anyone outside. So, even if you do not know whether there is anyone outside, you have to call for help.

So, in any case, we have to ask for the help of the Truth to be Successful.

And as said in the following verse, Allah is Near; and He promises to respond to our sincere supplications:

And when My servants ask you, (O Muhammad), concerning Me,

Indeed I am near.

I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me. So let them respond to Me (by obedience) and believe in Me that they may be [rightly] guided.

(Quran: 2/186)

Therefore the acceptance and help of Allah are important requirements for success. These are near the ones who have a certain degree of sincerity, humility, thankfulness and other positive qualifications mentioned in the Quran. However, they do not reach certain people as the ones who do not reason, or the people who are under the control of their short term desires as explained in the following:

¹¹⁹ Al-Bukhaari, Muslim

And it is not for a soul to believe except by permission of Allah, and He will place defilement upon those who will not use reason.

(Quran: 10/100)

But those who [willingly] open their breasts to disbelief, upon them is wrath from Allah, and for them is a great punishment;

That is because they preferred the worldly life over the Hereafter and that Allah does not guide the disbelieving people.

(Quran: 16/106-107)

While a person is under the influence of his short term desires, and never asks for the help of Allah, the Truth, it is not possible for him to benefit from neither signs nor warnings. This is because belief is not only a matter of logic, but also a matter of justice, thankfulness, carefulness, vision... There is a reference to this fact in the following verses:

Signs and warnings do not benefit those people who do not believe.

(Quran: 10/101)

O mankind, your injustice is only against yourselves, [being merely] the enjoyment of worldly life.

Then to Us is your return,

And We will inform you of what you used to do.

(Quran: 10/23)

Nobody should lose hope from Allah as all of us are subject to sins and mistakes. Nobody should be certain against the negative things that may come from Him. A Muslim should adopt the middle way so that the result may be

positive. There is a reference to these facts in the following verses:

“Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.”
(Quran: 12/87)

Then did they feel secure from the plan of Allah? But no one feels secure from the plan of Allah except the losing people.
(Quran: 7/99)

Therefore everyone should be in a state of asking for His help.

6.4 OUR EFFORTS & PERSEVERANCE

We have to give up short term joys and low level goals and desires beyond legitimate levels, in order to reach permanent full satisfaction and high level and long term goals. A Muslim has to wake up when it is still dark, instead of sleeping, in order to be together with His Lord. He has to give part of his money to the needy so that he may get the pleasure of Allah. He has to refrain from drinking alcohol so that he may obey Allah and so that he may keep his health. However, the short term joys and pains pass and the long term bigger goals will be reached if we are strong enough. For this end, we need to spend efforts, and in this way we may improve ourselves in terms of qualifications that Allah loves. To continue in this road we need patience and perseverance, because sometimes the conflict between the short and long terms may hurt in the short term. This is mentioned in the following verse:

And persevere¹²⁰, for indeed, Allah does not allow to be lost the reward of those who do good.

(Quran: 11/115)

On the other hand, human beings are only required to spend efforts that they are able to. Allah says in the Quran:

Allah does not charge a soul beyond its capacity.

(Quran: 2/286)

So, for example while someone's health prevents him from going to pilgrimage, it is not a sin for him to not to go to pilgrimage. So, human beings have no argument against Allah for the requirements they do not do although they have been able to do.

And whatever human beings do in order to comply with the orders and values of Allah is eventually useful for them. Allah says the following:

Allah intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship.

(Quran: 2/185)

On the other hand, our efforts have to be sincere. Our efforts must be with the goal of getting the pleasure of Allah, not for show to others. In the following verses Allah tells us this fact:

So woe to those who pray, [But] who are heedless of their prayer;

Those who make show and refuse to help the needy.

(Quran: 107/4-7)

¹²⁰To persist, to be patient

Indeed, the hypocrites will be in the lowest depths of the Fire and never will you find for them a helper.
(Quran: 4/145)

Say,
“Indeed, my prayer, my rites of sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allah, Lord of the worlds.”
(Quran: 6/162)

6.5 OTHER FACULTIES

On the other side, Allah has given us certain faculties as seeing, hearing, understanding, knowing, thinking, remembering, learning and so on. All these help us to make better decisions. We have to put to good use these powers that Allah has entrusted to us. For example, if we look at the billions of the favors of Allah but do not think about their source, then we may have wasted our seeing and thinking capacities.

6.6 OBVIOUS FACTS

There are many signs in the heavens and the earth which they pass by; yet they pay no attention to them!
(Quran: 12/105)

[It will be said], “Read your record. Sufficient is yourself against you this Day as accountant.”
(Quran: 17/14)

And He has cast into the earth firmly set mountains, lest it shift with you, and [made] rivers and roads, that you may be guided, and landmarks.

And by the stars they are [also] guided.

(Quran: 16/15-16)

On that day Allah will pay back to them in full their just reward, and they shall know that Allah is the evident Truth.

(Quran: 24/25)

So rely upon Allah;

Indeed, you are upon the evident truth.

(Quran: 27/79)

Also Allah has created obvious facts that let us know what is right and what is wrong. For example in schools we study different sciences in order to benefit from facts. For example looking at the stars we can find out the direction where we need to proceed.

Additionally Allah clarified in His messages some obvious facts regarding the framework in which we are.

Among them there are some obvious facts that everyone agrees with. For example, the fire or a place like the hell is not desirable for a human being.

In the present world there are also facts which are not thought to be obvious by all at all times. For example, the facts in our surroundings that show us the favors of our Creator may be obvious for some, and not so obvious or even obviously wrong for others. The cause of the difference may be that as human beings in some cases we have shortcomings in our decision processes, or in some cases we may have blocked our decision processes due to our short term desires.

However, once everybody faced the consequences of the obvious signs of Allah in the hereafter, it will be understood that they were obvious for everyone at all times. It will be understood as explained in the following verse that Allah was not playing a game; however those who rejected them were not able to see them for certain reasons:

And We did not create the heavens and earth and that between them in play.
(Quran: 44/38)

This is the conclusion of the believer. However, the disbelievers will be confused even while they witness the truth in the hereafter as said in the Quran:

And whoever is blind in this [life] will be blind in the Hereafter and more astray in way.
(Quran: 17/72)

6.7 THE MESSAGES FROM THE CREATOR

And they will say, “Praise to Allah, who has guided us to this; and we would never have been guided if Allah had not guided us. Certainly the messengers of our Lord had come with the truth.”
(Quran: 7/43)

Our Creator gave us messages which contain knowledge, goals, guidelines, reminders necessary for us. They are critical for our success. Therefore it is important to read, to understand, and to follow them in order to be successful.

6.8 OUR INITIAL CODES

The human being is distinguished from other beings such as stones, plants or animals. He has been enabled to search for the good, to think, and was given a special consciousness.

Man is not tired of supplication for good [things], but if evil touches him, he is hopeless and despairing.
(Quran: 41/49)

Also deep inside each human being there are the traces of faith in Allah as mentioned in the Quran:

And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam from their loins their descendants and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them], “Am I not your Lord?” They said, “Yes, we have testified.” [This] lest you should say on the day of Resurrection, “Indeed, we were of this unaware.”
(Quran: 7/172)

And as explained in the following verses, whoever purifies his soul from artificial impurities will activate the pure essence of his soul and will succeed:

And [I swear] by the soul and He who proportioned it
And inspired it [with discernment of] its wickedness
and its righteousness,
He has succeeded who purifies it,
And he has failed who instills it [with corruption].
(Quran: 91/7-10)

7 CONCLUSION

So, with the help of the signs in the Quran we conclude that Islam is about:

1. Being loved by Allah, Our Creator, Our Lord and loving Allah:

HE¹²¹ loves them and they love HIM.
(Quran: 5/54)

2. Being guided by Allah:

By which Allah guides those who pursue His pleasure to the ways of peace and brings them out from darknesses into the light, by His permission, and guides them to a straight path.
(Quran: 5/16)

3. Reasoning about the signs of Allah:

He shows you His signs that you might reason.
(Quran: 2/73)

4. Believing in Allah:

Believe in Allah and His Messenger and the Book that He sent down upon His Messenger and the Scripture which He sent down before.
(Quran: 4/136)

5. Trusting in Allah:

¹²¹ Allah

In Allah let the believers trust.
(Quran: 3/160)

6. Remembering Allah &

7. Thanking Allah:

Therefore remember Me, I will remember you, and thank Me and do not be ungrateful to Me.
(Quran: 2/152)

8. Supplicating to Allah:

Say, “Call upon Allah or call upon the Beneficent. Whichever [name] you call, to Him belong the best names.”
(Quran: 17/110)

9. Asking for the help of Allah:

And seek help through patience and prayer, and indeed, it is difficult except for the humbly submissive [to Allah].
(Quran: 2/45)

10. Being careful of Allah:

And be careful of Allah that you may succeed.
(Quran: 2/189)

11. Being sincere for Allah &

12. Holding fast to Allah:

Except for those who repent, correct themselves, hold fast to Allah, and are sincere in their religion for Allah,

for those will be with the believers. And Allah is going to give the believers a great reward.

(Quran: 4/146)

13. Serving Allah:

And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to serve Me.

(Quran: 51/56)

14. Obeying Allah:

Say, “Obey Allah and the Messenger.”

(Quran: 3/32)

15. Doing good deeds for Allah:

And do good; indeed, Allah loves the doers of good.

(Quran: 2/195)

16. Living for Allah&

17. Dying for Allah:

Say, “Indeed, my prayer, my rites of sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allah, Lord of the worlds.”

(Quran: 6/162)

18. Submitting to Allah:

When his Lord said to him, “Submit”, he said “I have submitted to the Lord of the worlds.”

(Quran: 2/131)

19. Persevering through Allah:

And be patient, and your patience is not but through Allah.

(Quran: 16/127)

20. Persevering for Allah:

And for your Lord be patient.

(Quran: 74/7)

21. Belonging to Allah:

Who, when disaster strikes them, say, “Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return.”

(Quran: 2/156)

22. Being with Allah:

Surely Allah is with those who guard (against evil) and those who do good.

(Quran: 16/128)

23. Agreeing with Allah:

And whosoever fulfills what he has covenanted with Allah, He will bestow on him a great reward.

(Quran: 48/10)

24. Being true to Allah:

If they were true to Allah, it would be better for them.

(Quran: 47/21)

25. Reaching Allah:

The return of you (all) is to Allah.

(Quran: 5/48)

- 26.** Pleasing Allah &
27. Being pleased with Allah:

Allah being pleased with them and they with Him. That is the great success.

(Quran: 5/119)

- 28.** Being satisfied by Allah:

(To the righteous soul it will be said:)

“O fully satisfied soul!

Return to your Lord, well-pleased and pleasing [to Him],

And enter among My [righteous] servants

And enter My Paradise.”

(Quran: 89/27-30)

- 29.** Allah.

8 QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

8.1 ARE MEN AND WOMEN EQUAL IN ISLAM?

O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another.

Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you.

Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted.

(Quran: 49/13)

Men and women have the same status in Islam. A righteous woman may have a higher degree in the sight of Allah than a man who is not careful of his duty to Allah. The following verses are some examples in this respect:

Indeed, the Muslim men and Muslim women, the believing men and believing women, the obedient men and obedient women, the truthful men and truthful women, the patient men and patient women, the humble men and humble women, the charitable men and charitable women, the fasting men and fasting women, the men who guard their private parts and the women who do so, and the men who remember Allah often and the women who do so for them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward.

(Quran: 33/35)

And their Lord responded to them, “Never will I allow to be lost the work of [any] worker among you, whether male or female; you are of one another. So those who emigrated or were evicted from their homes or were

harmd in My cause or fought or were killed I will surely remove from them their misdeeds, and I will surely admit them to gardens beneath which rivers flow as reward from Allah, and Allah has with Him the best reward.”

(Quran: 3/195)

The believing men and believing women are allies of one another. They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and establish prayer and give regular charity and obey Allah and His Messenger. Those Allah will have mercy upon them. Indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise.

(Quran: 9/71)

For men is a share of what they have earned, and for women is a share of what they have earned.

(Quran: 4/32)

O you who have believed, it is not lawful for you to inherit women by compulsion. And do not make difficulties for them in order to take [back] part of what you gave them unless they commit a clear immorality. And live with them in kindness. For if you dislike them - perhaps you dislike a thing and Allah makes therein much good.

(Quran: 4/19)

The superiority in the sight of Allah is according to the righteousness, not according to gender or wealth. Mary and the wife of Pharaoh (Peace be upon them) who have been mentioned in the Quran for example occupy higher degrees in the sight of Allah when compared to many men. The following verses are relevant in this respect:

And Allah presents an example of those who believed: the wife of Pharaoh, when she said, “My Lord, build for me near You a house in Paradise and save me from Pharaoh and his deeds and save me from the wrongdoing people.”

And [the example of] Mary, the daughter of Imran, who guarded her chastity, so We blew therein through Our angel, and she believed in the words of her Lord and His scriptures and was of the devoutly obedient.
(Quran: 66/11-12)

In Islam being the servant of Allah, is the most important aspect of identity. So gender must not be considered above the attribute of being the servant of Allah. Islam raises woman from being the consequence of a coincidence to the degree of a being that exists according to certain goals within the plan of the Creator. As such a being she is entitled under certain conditions to be the lover and the beloved one of the Creator, and to establish peace on the earth.

Again the women and men form one whole as explained in the following verse:

And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought.
(Quran: 30/21)

Islam related once more by Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) 14 centuries ago transformed women from being the objects of transactions for sexual desires, from being people ashamed of, to being individuals who have dignity and identity who have human rights and duties.

The rights and requirements for both women and men

are the same. For example, the wealth and bodies of both women and men are subject to legal protection; both women and men have to be just even though this may cost any man or woman some millions of dollars; both women and men have to wake up before the sunrise each day for the morning prayer...

Both men and women can hold highest positions as mentioned in the Quran by the example of the Queen of Saba:

She (The Queen of Sheba) said, O eminent ones, advise me in my affair. I would not decide a matter until you witness [for] me.

They said, We are men of strength and of great military might, but the command is yours, so see what you will command.

(Quran: 27/32-33)

Islam recognizes the identity and certain different features of each gender as well. Islam does not reject the special attributes of women. Therefore, there are some situations where there are differences between the requirements upon women and men.

Some of these differences seem to be more advantageous for women. For example, the livelihood of a family is upon the men; as a convenience for women, they may pray in their homes or offices and are not required to go to mosque.

Also in war time generally the men are required to participate in the war.

Islam requires from a man a strict discipline which we can see in the strict prohibition of adultery, alcohol, and the requirement of responsibility for family. Therefore, Islam is very useful for each woman who wants to have a regular,

peaceful and predictable life.

Today men, women, children are generally denied many of their natural aspects. Islam protects all of them according to their definite attributes. Islam is a system. In Islam men, women and children are like parts of a designed organism completing one another in many ways. Strengths of some cancel the weaknesses of others. And thanks to these they can form couples and families.

The duties of each gender regarding the family should be recognized so that men, women and children may be happier and healthier.

The family, children, and mothers are harmed because of general lifestyles that lack the Islamic measures. Thus, as today mostly the women are encouraged to be like men, we see many sad situations as small children weeping each morning when being left in the day nurseries; or children coming home without anyone being there until late in the nights; lots of consequent psychological, economical... problems for everyone.

Also today the male dominant western culture inspires short-term, superficial and free relations between men and women. So both genders are generally deprived from long term, deep, and warm relationships. Many men may see this situation as advantageous, as they have access to as many women as they wish, while having very limited responsibility for the consequent pregnancy and children. As women are more sensitive to warm, long term, and deep feelings; and as there is closer relationship between the mothers and their children the biggest harm of this lifestyle is against women. Because of such a lifestyle people become and feel more and more lonely as such relationships cannot satisfy human needs. Again because of such a lifestyle, there are many children who do not live together with their parents, or who never

know their mothers or fathers although they are alive. There are many other problems that arise from such a lifestyle due to the lack of the Islamic measures.

Essentially these problems are also related to the disbelieving approach that denies the unity of the Creator who sustains all. So when everything is seen as isolated from each other, without any link between anything, the social consequences will be mostly negative as seen in the above examples¹²².

Therefore the overall systematic of Islam regarding genders contain fundamental advantages for women. Probably this is one of the reasons for the higher number of women who choose Islam in many countries, when compared with the number of men who choose Islam.

On the other hand, in the Quran there are some situations which may be considered by some people as less advantageous for women, although they are advantageous in many respects both for women and the society. These exceptions are as follows: -The requirement to cover a larger part of the body for women compared to men. -The conditional permission for men to marry up to four women. - In some situations the inheritance of more wealth for men when compared to certain women. -The substitution of one man witness with two women witnesses in specific legal situations that relate to debt.

As especially the issues that look disadvantageous for women are subject to questions, we will clarify them briefly in the following parts:

¹²² Contrary to the polarized understanding of everything in some contemporary approaches, in Islam, everything is part of the plan of the Wise Allah and everything is part of a system. Therefore every identity has to be respected and recognized.

8.1.1 COVERING SOME PARTS OF THE BODY

And tell the believing women to reduce [some] of their vision and guard their private parts and not expose their adornment except that which [necessarily] appears thereof and to wrap [a portion of] their head-covers over their chests and not expose their adornment except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands' fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers, their brothers' sons, their sisters' sons, their women, that which their right hands possess, or those male attendants having no physical desire, or children who are not yet aware of the private aspects of women. And let them not stamp their feet to make known what they conceal of their adornment. And turn to Allah in repentance, all of you, O believers, that you might succeed.

(Quran: 24/31)

O Prophet, tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to bring down over themselves [part] of their outer garments. That is more suitable that they will be known and not be abused. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful.

(Quran: 33/59)

Both women and men have to cover certain parts of their bodies. But the women have to cover their hair¹²³, while the men do not have. This may be against the desires of some women who may want to show their beauties to all and against the desires of some men who may want to have more access

¹²³ This is not required when in the same location, for example at home there are only certain people mentioned in the Quran such as their brothers, uncles, fathers...

to beautiful women around themselves.

We may summarize the reasons for this measure as follows -Allah knows the best:-

Firstly, in Islam, one must concentrate first of all in Allah instead of sexual desires outside marriage.

Secondly, one has to have control over his/her short term desires. In a society which is full of tempting men and women; in a society where people concentrate on enjoying excessive sexual joys, wealth, status; nobody may be happy. Because in such a society, an average person's soul will be broken up into many parts that run after many different desires like a person whose organs are taken apart.

Thirdly in a society where people are tempting, both men and women will tend more toward cheating or not to get married. The strength of the ties between wife and husband will be less. In such an environment, there will be fewer children, and the children will have more risk of having divorced parents or no mothers or no fathers or no parents at all. Consequently, there will be more use of drugs, more crimes, population ageing and many other problems.

On the other hand in a society where there are not such measures there will happen more sexual crimes against both genders.

But the women who wear modestly as required by Islam give a message to everyone about the importance of long term goals of Islam, the importance of family and children.

One might ask "Why women have more requirements in this respect than men?" Research shows that regarding sexual feelings, men are more sensitive to vision, and women

are more sensitive to more personal features as smell¹²⁴. And as we see in the wide spread exploitation of the feminine beauties of women in many commercials, it is apparent that women are more influential in their look compared to men¹²⁵. Therefore, although men also have to cover certain parts of their bodies, women are subject to more comprehensive measures in this respect.

There are variations in the way the Muslim women dress. Some do not wear hijab¹²⁶. Most of such women accept that not to wear it is a sin. They may be expecting to be forgiven by Allah. Some of them may be interpreting wrongly that covering the hair is not strictly required.

Most practicing Muslim women wear according to the general requirements explained above.

Some Muslim women wear so that only their eyes are seen or so that nothing of their bodies is seen at all. This may be sometimes because of the culture of their community. This may also be because of an interpretation of the following verse in a way to include all Muslim women:

O you who have believed, do not enter the dwellings of the Prophet for a meal, without awaiting its readiness, except when you are permitted. But when you are invited, then enter; and when you have eaten, disperse without seeking to remain for conversation. Indeed, that [behavior] was troubling the Prophet, and he is shy

¹²⁴ The cause of this is mostly considered to be the fact that men decide about their future mate from further away compared to women.

¹²⁵ For example remember how attractive women are positioned next to cars in an automobile fair.

¹²⁶ This is a term used for the scarf or the required parts of clothes according to Islam. Essentially it means curtain or partition.

of [dismissing] you. But Allah is not shy of the truth. And when you ask them¹²⁷ [his wives] for something, ask them¹²⁸ from behind a partition¹²⁹. That is purer for your hearts and their¹³⁰ hearts. And it is not [conceivable or lawful] for you to harm the Messenger of Allah or to marry his wives after him, ever. Indeed, that would be in the sight of Allah an enormity.
(Quran: 33/53)

8.1.2 PERMISSION FOR MEN TO MARRY UP TO FOUR WOMEN UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS

O people! Be careful of (your duty to) your Lord, Who created you from a single being and created its mate of the same and spread from these two, many men and women; and be careful of (your duty to) Allah, by Whom you demand one of another (your rights), and (to) the ties of relationship; surely Allah ever watches over you.

And give to the orphans their properties and do not substitute the defective [of your own] for the good [of theirs]. And do not consume their properties into your own. Indeed, that is ever a great sin.

And if you fear that you will not deal justly with the orphans, then marry those that please you of [other]

¹²⁷ This is the feminine use of “them” in the original text in Arabic.

¹²⁸ This is the feminine use of “them” in the original text in Arabic.

¹²⁹ The word in the original text is “hijab”.

¹³⁰ In feminine form in Arabic in the original text.

women, two or three or four. But if you fear that you will not be just, then [marry only] one or what your right hands possess. That is more suitable that you may not incline to injustice.

(Quran: 4/1-3)

As we see in the above verses, marrying more than one woman is not a requirement and it is just a permission and it is based on certain conditions. Essentially in these verses a limitation is ruled as to the number of wives that a man can marry.

The Quran is not a book for just some years, it is so that it can be applied until the end of the world, of the current phase in our universe. In different countries, periods or situations there may be need for a freedom to marry more than one wife. For example in war times there may be lots of women who lose their husbands. If there is no such permission in such situations, there may be lots of women who will be in trouble economically, psychologically, biologically and in many other ways.

There may be other situations where the permission to marry more than one wife may be beneficial for both husband and the wife: If the wife is sterile, and the husband wants children, the husband may want to divorce; however the women may prefer his husband to marry another woman instead of divorce¹³¹. If the wife has some health problem and cannot fulfill the requirements of marriage and does not wish her husband to divorce her, she may prefer her husband to marry another wife. If the man is financially strong and sexually demanding and his wife is not so, in this case the husband's marrying another woman may be preferable to his unlawful relation outside marriage with another woman.

¹³¹ In Islam divorce is legal.

In countries where it is not allowed to marry more than one woman, if the above situations happen, many people tend to be together with women other than their wives outside marriage. These additional relationships are not sanctioned seriously, while however they are considered cheating. In such cases, the men again get what they need to some extent, while they do not have any responsibilities for the additional partners. Nevertheless, the husband, the wife, the partner, and the children enter into serious troubles.

One might argue that for similar reasons women also would be allowed to marry more than one man. However in this case, the consequent harms for everyone would be much bigger than the benefits. Firstly, the father of the child would not be clear. Even if DNA tests would give some guidance, the father would not feel his fatherhood much for a child born from a woman who is the wife of others, and who contains seed of other men as well. Secondly, feelings of leadership are generally stronger in men. Therefore more than one husband in a family might cause big clashes.

On the other hand, in Islam a woman may put as condition to a man whom she will marry, not to marry another one as long as she is married to him. Therefore, marrying more than one wife is not an unlimited or illimitable permission.

Additionally, limitation to marry up to four women is a permission if the legal system forbids being together outside marriage. In most countries as of today, a man or woman can be with as many persons of the other sex as he or she wants, and can have children from as many persons as he or she want without being married. So, in this respect, Islam is protective for women, family, and children in a real sense.

8.1.3 THE INHERITANCE OF MORE WEALTH FOR SONS AND HUSBANDS WHEN COMPARED WITH DAUGHTERS AND WIVES UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS

Allah instructs you concerning your children: for the male, what is equal to the share of two females. But if there are [only] daughters, two or more, for them is two thirds of one's estate. And if there is only one, for her is half.

And for one's parents, to each one of them is a sixth of his estate if he left children. But if he had no children and the parents inherit from him, then for his mother is one third.

And if he had brothers [or sisters], for his mother is a sixth.

After any bequest he [may have] made or debt.

Your parents or your children, you know not which of them are nearest to you in benefit.

[These shares are] an obligation [imposed] by Allah. Indeed, Allah is ever Knowing and Wise.

And for you is half of what your wives leave if they have no child. But if they have a child, for you is one fourth of what they leave, after any bequest they [may have] made or debt. And for the wives is one fourth if you leave no child. But if you leave a child, then for them is an eighth of what you leave.

After any bequest you [may have] made or debt.

And if a man or woman leaves neither ascendants nor descendants but has a brother or a sister, then for each one of them is a sixth.

But if they are more than two, they share a third, after any bequest which was made or debt, as long as there is no detriment [caused].

[This is] an ordinance from Allah, and Allah is Knowing and Forbearing.
(Quran: 4/11-12)

If we browse through the list of the richest 100, 200 ... people in the world, we notice that the number of women are less than %10. Many of these people are in the non-Muslim countries. If we look at the political figures or the high bureaucracy we see more or less a similar picture. This shows us clearly that the men have more will and capacities to increase wealth. It seems that there is no apparent big objection of women to this situation; and this is natural since all these men have daughters, wives, mothers who enjoy same or better living standards compared to their husbands or fathers, while feeling less worries.

None of these facts show any superiority or inferiority of any gender. Allah expresses this in the following verse:

It is not your wealth nor your sons, that will bring you nearer to Us in degree.
(Quran: 34/37)

A man may be creating employment for thousands of people; however, the one who gave birth to him and raised him was a woman. Also probably his success has a lot to do with the support of his wife.

In such a structure, the efficient use of resources requires certain mechanisms that give the management of the resources more to those who can manage them more efficiently. On the other hand, sufficient economic sustenance must be secured for everyone.

There are very detailed regulations and studies within the Islamic inheritance law. According to the inheritance principles in Islam, in certain situations women have the equal

share as men and in certain situations certain women receive less than men. The continual financial responsibilities for the family or for the parents belong mainly to the men. For example, before marriage the man is required to give or pledge his wife an amount of wealth that his wife accepts. As a consequence, this difference in distribution under certain conditions is in one way to enable the men to perform their duties better. So, a woman may inherit less, however her present or future husband may receive a larger portion when compared to his sister.

Therefore, because of the positive inheritance provisions for men, when a husband spends to his family, this is not a voluntary behavior or a favor or a charity but this is a duty for the man and a right for the woman. So based on this systematic, the women may feel comfortable while benefiting from the wealth of the family, as the wealth of the husband is considered essentially the wealth of the family. Thus the husband has to provide an equal living standard both for himself and for his wife.

8.1.4 THE SUBSTITUTION OF ONE MAN WITNESS WITH TWO WOMEN WITNESSES IN CERTAIN LEGAL CASES

O you who have believed, when you contract a debt for a specified term, write it down. And let a scribe write [it] between you in justice. Let no scribe refuse to write as Allah has taught him.

So let him write and let the one who has the obligation dictate. And let him fear Allah, his Lord, and not leave anything out of it.

But if the one who has the obligation is of limited understanding or weak or unable to dictate himself,

then let his guardian dictate in justice. And bring to witness two witnesses from among your men. And if there are not two men [available], then a man and two women from those whom you accept as witnesses so that if one of the women errs, then the other can remind her.

And let not the witnesses refuse when they are called upon. And do not be [too] weary to write it, whether it is small or large, for its [specified] term; that is more just in the sight of Allah and stronger as evidence and more likely to prevent doubt between you, except when it is an immediate transaction which you conduct among yourselves. For then there is no blame upon you if you do not write it. And take witnesses when you conclude a contract.

Let no scribe be harmed or any witness. For if you do so, indeed, it is [grave] disobedience in you. And fear Allah. And Allah teaches you. And Allah is Knowing of all things.

(Quran: 2/282)

Witnessing is mostly a duty especially regarding a written witnessing about debt. As there may be pressures on the witness, the witness may be required to witness in an inappropriate situation, and it may require a certain effort to witness justly. In the above verse there is a reference to this in the statement “Let no scribe be harmed or any witness”. This risk and the need for efforts are very probable in cases relating to a debt agreement which may contain many details.

Therefore, an important reason for the difference between the requirement of witnessing in the above situation between men and women may be to reduce the burden of witnessing for a woman and distribute it from one woman to two women.

8.1.5 SOME OTHER ISSUES ABOUT THE QUESTION “ARE MEN AND WOMEN EQUAL IN ISLAM?”

In the previous parts we explained the differences in the requirements for men and women, and the benefits of these differences for all¹³².

¹³² It would be useful here to explain the following verse which is sometimes misunderstood:

Men are in charge of women by [right of] what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend [for maintenance] from their wealth. So righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in [the husband's] absence what Allah would have them guard. But those [wives] from whom you fear ill conduct advise them; forsake them in bed; and strike them. But if they obey you, seek no means against them. Indeed, Allah is ever Exalted and Grand.

(Quran: 4/34)

Normally people are kind and careful about family members. However, there are also cases where wives fear from the ill conducts of their husbands or vice versa. There are also women who oppress their husbands without any valid reason, who throw objects at them, who kick, who hit, who wound them, who cause terror and disorder in the family although their husbands did nothing wrong or maybe because they just could not afford something. Unfortunately such ill conduct sometimes would cause some exceptional actions shown by men in order to prevent divorce or exposing private family matters to the outsiders; or for self-defense and so on if other steps mentioned in the above verse cannot produce any positive result.

Allah orders men to be kind toward women, and the practice of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) who never used violence toward his wives who upset him sometimes confirms this order.

On the other hand, if such misbehavior happens against women, they can also naturally use certain measures mentioned in the above verse against their husbands. Or in case of disobedience

However, one should bear in mind that a Muslim does not comply with these requirements because of their worldly benefits. For a Muslim, once it is clear that a certain order is from Allah, then there are sufficient reasons to comply with this order. These reasons are to get the pleasure of Allah, and the respect and fear of Allah. The following verse is relevant in this respect:

And if We had decreed upon them, “Kill yourselves” or “Leave your homes,” they would not have done it, except for a few of them. But if they had done what they were instructed, it would have been better for them and a firmer position [for them in faith].
(Quran: 4/66)

On the other hand, in any case the favors of Allah are millions of times bigger than any difficulty that we may

on behalf of their husbands the women may also act as recommended in the following verse:

And if a woman fears rebelliousness or evasion in her husband, there is no sin upon them if they make terms of settlement between them and settlement is best. And present in [human] souls is stinginess. But if you do good and fear Allah then indeed Allah is ever, with what you do, Acquainted.
(Quran: 4/128)

Again we should note that the word “strike” in the verse 4/34 also means “separate from” and translated likewise by some translators. This meaning is in parallel with the order of Allah to live in kindness with women as stated in in verse 4/19 of the Quran. This meaning is also in parallel with the facts that upon certain behaviors of the wives of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) Allah recommended him to release them by divorce in goodness if they wish so without recommending him to apply any violence. This meaning is also in harmony with the fact that Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) advised strongly against using violence on women.

undergo because of the orders of Allah. For example how many women would choose the alternative (b) if Allah asked the women who find certain duties as too hard: “Choose one of the following alternatives: (a) I will sustain your seeing capacity, but you will have to comply with my obligations for women. (b) You will be free to comply or not with these obligations but I will take back only your seeing capacity.”

However as we see in the following verse, Allah intends easiness for us:

Allah intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship.
(Quran: 2/185)

So, we believe that the benefits of the orders of Allah to be bigger than their disadvantages in worldly terms as well. We mentioned some of the benefits of the exceptional rules for women. But it is clear as explained in the following verse that we may have overlooked or missed some of the benefits that Allah knows:

It may be that you dislike a thing while it is good for you, it may be that you love a thing while it is evil for you; and Allah knows while you know not.
(Quran: 2/216)

Additionally, we should also consider the relevance of the disadvantages for a certain gender as a criterion in recognizing and obeying Allah. In some cases the cause of disbelief is the rejection of things that are against some personal feelings such as the difficulties arising because of the duties. In this case the person who rejects faith because of difficulties should question if his intention to believe is sincere. If one chooses to disobey Allah or deny Him because of the duties or rights of a gender, certainly Allah is never

harmful because of this denial. This is mentioned in the following verse:

To us they did no harm, but they harmed their own souls.

(Quran: 2/57)

8.2 WHY DO WE SEE ON THE MEDIA MANY VIOLENT ACTIONS PERFORMED IN THE NAME OF ISLAM OR ALLAH?

Islam means peace and as we see in the following verses, Allah invites Muslims to behave justly to everyone including the disbelievers. In Islam it is not allowed to force someone to accept a certain religion:

Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in the most courteous manner.

Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is [rightly] guided.

(Quran: 16/125)

There shall be no compulsion in the religion. The right course has become clear from the wrong.

(Quran: 2/256)

Because of such orders in the Quran, in the history of Islam, Muslims have not forced others to be Muslims.

Furthermore, as we see in the following verses, Allah does not allow Muslims to attack those who do not attack the Muslims. However, the Muslims are required to defend

themselves:

So if they remove themselves from you and do not fight you and offer you peace, then Allah has not made for you a cause [for fighting] against them.
(Quran: 4/90)

And do not argue with the People of the Scripture except in a way that is best, except for those who commit injustice among them. And say, We believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you. And our God and your God is one; and we are Muslims [in submission] to Him.
(Quran: 29/46)

Allah does not forbid you from those who do not fight you because of religion and do not expel you from your homes from dealing kindly with them and acting justly toward them. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly.
(Quran: 60/8)

And it is big sin to harm human beings as we see in the following statement:

“Wrong not mankind in their goods, and do not evil, making mischief, in the earth.”
(Quran: 26/183)

A good example in this respect happened when Muslims got Mecca back from the disbelievers who killed many Muslims, declared and organized many wars against Muslims, tortured them, took their wealth by violence. The Muslims in the leadership of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) forgave those disbelievers although they had the power to retaliate and destroy them. So it is clear that the acts

of terrorists who claim to kill innocent and defenseless civilians in the name of Allah, have nothing to do with Islam, as in Islam even in wartime such civilians must not be killed. Such people are very few within almost 2 billion Muslims.

Sometimes there are people who do evil for political or economic goals but who claim to act in the name of Allah as they feel the need to hide behind some generally accepted concepts.

Sometimes, terrorist activities are performed and claimed in the name of Muslims or Muslim groups in order to create a bad impression about Islam and Muslims.

In many situations, non-Muslims reconcile terrorists with Islam wherefore they unconsciously support the terrorists by considering them as a part, or kind of representative of the large community of Islam. A simple example of such an attitude is the use of the concept “Islamic terrorism” in the media by non-Muslims. As terrorism cannot be Islamic -peaceful- “Islamic terrorism” is a misleading and wrong statement which may be useful only for such terrorists.

Some media channels partially give the impression that Islam promotes violence, although violent acts of the adherents of the other cultures and their consequences are much bigger than such acts of those seen as linked to Islam. For example in the Second World War which happened in the western world that adheres to religions other than Islam approximately 60 million people were killed¹³³. 40 to 52 million of them were civilians including 13 to 20 million who died because of war-related diseases and famine.

¹³³ Daily average of people who died because of this war which lasted 6 years was approximately 30.000

8.3 IF THERE IS DESTINY, IF ALLAH KNOWS ALL, HOW CAN WE HAVE FREE WILL AND HOW CAN WE BE RESPONSIBLE?¹³⁴

The details of this question can be rephrased as follows: “Our choices/wills relate to our background, our education, our environment, our genes, and our capacities... All of these must be in the destiny. So if the god is Allah then our choices must be forced and determined by Allah; then we cannot have free will and therefore we cannot be responsible. At least as He has not put us on the right path then does not this mean that He is responsible for our choices? Also if the god is Allah and if He knows the future, then He cannot contradict His knowledge or His destiny relating to the future by His present actions. And if He has the power to do whatever He wills His actions will be in harmony with what was already known by Him. If the god is Allah and if there is destiny, then for example before I disbelieve, it is known that as a disbeliever I will disbelieve and that I will enter the hell. So how can I change it?”

In the following verses we see a summary of such questions:

Those who associated partners [with Allah] will say, “If Allah had willed, we would not have associated [anything with Allah] and neither would our fathers, nor would we have prohibited anything.” Likewise did those before deny until they tasted Our punishment. Say, “Do you have any knowledge that you can

¹³⁴ For details of free will according to Islam, see the latest edition of the e-book “Free Will Under the Light of the Quran” by Ender Tosun. The book is available for free on the internet.

produce for us? You follow not except assumption, and you are not but falsifying.”

Say, “With Allah is the far-reaching argument. If He had willed, He would have guided you all.”

Say, [O Muhammad], “Bring forward your witnesses who will testify that Allah has prohibited this.” And if they testify, do not testify with them. And do not follow the desires of those who deny Our verses and those who do not believe in the Hereafter, while they equate [others] with their Lord.
(Quran: 6/148-150)

8.3.1 WE HAVE FREE WILL TO A CERTAIN EXTENT

And say, “The truth is from your Lord, so whoever wills let him believe; and whoever wills let him disbelieve.”

(Quran: 18/29)

Allah is never unjust to His servants¹³⁵.

(Quran: 8/51)

Whoever is guided is only guided for [the benefit of] his soul. And whoever errs only errs against it. And no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another. And never would We punish until We sent a messenger.

(Quran: 17/15)

Everybody who is taken responsible and rewarded or punished in the hereafter has the potential to find out the truth

¹³⁵ Nobody could require Him to respond even if He was unjust.

and to be successful¹³⁶. Everybody has the freedom to choose the good or the evil, the paradise or the hell. Every human being¹³⁷ has the free will but does not have the power to negate the will of Allah. Although there are certain restrictions regarding the free will, ultimately each person has the potential to overcome the relevant negative restrictions.

Our wills have a lot to do with our past, our knowledge, our environment, our mood, our biological and chemical composition... However, from the empirical sciences' point of view it is too early to argue that there is a hard deterministic relationship between these factors and our wills. And as long as we do not comprehend all subatomic levels, and many other things this will be an early argument. As said in the Quran:

And they ask you about the soul. Say: The soul is one of the commands of my Lord, and you are not given aught of knowledge but a little.
(Quran: 17/85)

In Islam, the soul is not just a one way coincidental mechanical result of chemical, biological, physical, social... events and resources¹³⁸. The soul benefits from such

¹³⁶ If anyone does not have this potential, then he is not responsible.

¹³⁷ Those who are seriously disabled and do not have the ability to will are exceptions. These people are not considered as responsible in Islam.

¹³⁸ Actually to see the physical, chemical or biological events as just mechanical and blind events is only a very limited approach as we understand from the following verse:

The seven heavens and the earth and whatever is in them exalt Him. And there is not a thing except that it exalts [Allah] by His praise, but you do not understand their [way

resources, but it is not limited to what is available under certain conditions. Its essence is not based on only cause and effect relationships or mechanical processes based on causality. The soul has the potential to change and improve the conditions. For example, a person who faces difficulties in business may read certain books and get additional knowledge and overcome those difficulties.

The goals in the future are by definition and for everyone the desired and best situations. The time span in the future that will pass between the present and the time of the goal will be past at the time of the goal. If there are things about that future time span that we can change then we will be responsible. Otherwise we will not be responsible. Therefore there is no unjust responsibility.

The soul does not cover only the past that may have cause and effect influence, but also the future. Every will we make includes considerations about the future, the alternatives, their risks, their benefits and harms to a certain extent, while they have not happened yet. The soul covers also principles, values and so on which are not limited or located just within the past. We judge not only what alternative will happen if we take a certain decision, but also how we will feel if that alternative happens, and what happens if we feel that way. Yet we are free to choose knowingly a bad alternative.

Therefore we have a wide area of freedom.

As we see in the following verses, the human beings have certain special qualifications in this respect:

of] exalting. Indeed, He is ever Forbearing and Forgiving.
(Quran: 17/44)

Then He proportioned him and breathed into him from His soul and made for you hearing and vision and hearts; little are you grateful.
(Quran: 32/9)

And mention, [O Muhammad], when your Lord said to the angels, “Indeed, I will make upon the earth a viceroy”
(Quran: 2/30)

On the other hand, Allah gave us many means that together with this freedom may guide us toward the truth. The following are especially important: -The obvious signs created in our surroundings whose ever obviousness will be apparent for all, once all of us are resurrected. -The listening and help of Allah who can respond to our present supplications even while He made the Destiny. -The guidance of Allah through His messengers.

However, this freedom does not mean that the human being can negate Allah’s ultimate will. He can disobey the guidance of Allah as He has given the freedom to follow either the path of obedience or the path of disobedience. However, in the ultimate sense, whatever the human being does, he is surrounded by Allah as we see in the following verses:

And to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth.
And ever is Allah, of all things, encompassing.
(Quran: 4/126)

Indeed, Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.
(Quran: 2/115)

And you do not will except that Allah wills, Lord of the worlds.

(Quran: 81/29)

Although the human being has certain powers given by Allah, he cannot be successful except through Allah. The reasons for this are as follows:

Firstly, our circumstances are outcomes of Allah's plan and wills. For example, resources may be limited. Costs of the resources or costs of the alternatives may be high. Certain circumstances may be more difficult to overcome than others. So, even though we have free will, through such circumstances Allah may mislead an unjust person without interfering with his will. Also the alternatives that we have are determined by Allah.

Secondly everything we will is by the permission of Allah as seen in the following example from the Quran:

And it is not for a soul to believe except by permission of Allah.

(Quran: 10/100)

As we see in quote from Prophet Shuayb (Peace be upon him) in the Quran, our success depends on Allah:

“And my success is not but through Allah.
Upon him I have relied, and to Him I return.”

(Quran: 11/88)

As we see in the following verse, the guidance or misleading of Allah depend to a certain extent on our choices:

He misleads many thereby and guides many thereby.
And He misleads not except the defiantly disobedient.

(Quran: 2/26)

Allah, who is the Knower and Seer of all, knows and sees without any limitations of time. So, He knows the future as He knows the present. He sees the future as He sees the present. Therefore, any decision we will take in the future are ever known, seen and witnessed by Allah. He is able to change it in any ways He wants, including changing the relevant circumstances without any direct involvement with our wills. Thus, any will we make freely, is with the permission of Allah. Therefore, things we choose happen with the unanimous agreement of Allah and us.

Therefore in any case a Muslim who did a good work should seek the acceptance of Allah. The following is a quotation from an example statement of the believers in the hereafter:

And they will say,

“Praise [and thanks] to Allah, who has guided us to this; and we would never have been guided if Allah had not guided us. Certainly the messengers of our Lord had come with the truth.”

(Quran: 7/43)

“Indeed, we used to supplicate Him before.

Indeed, it is He who is the Beneficent, the Merciful.”

(Quran: 52/28)

From the perspective of a disbeliever it would be difficult to understand the free will as for him he is just a material sequence and processor in between biological, chemical, physical ... sequential processes. And as for him, there are only the physical dimensions; any other dimension including consciousness can be demoted to these dimensions.

Again, he is just a group of particles which coincidentally came together and which only act according to physical, certain or uncertain rules and relationships. Also, for him there is nobody who has full free will who can give him free will.

8.3.1.1 THE REASONS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF OUR WILLS

Allah, the Lord of all might create us like stones or angels who do not have any ability to negate His orders. He could have created us like programmed robots without feelings, therefore without choices, so without responsibility. However, in such a universe, there would not be the practices and feelings of sacrifice, help, pity, trust, truthfulness, judgment, reward, punishment, evil, wrong, and arrogance; the good and the truth would not be created and established; the evil and the wrong would not be created, judged, and punished...

But Allah is able to create the good and the evil.

For a person to be good or evil, he has to have the power to choose the good or the evil.

And through the present events, on one side the servants of Allah feel the favors and powers of Allah, and on the other the truth and the false are clearly distinguished.

Furthermore, if there is a reason for our creation, then there needs to be a conclusive stage for who we are. This conclusive stage is death.

The following chapter is relevant in this respect:

By time,

Indeed, man is in loss,
Except for those who have believed and done righteous
deeds and advised each other to truth and advised each
other to patience [and perseverance].
(Quran: 103/1-3)

Again with our free will, we have the opportunity to cooperate with Allah in establishing peace and in inviting to the way of our Lord. Thanks to our free will we may have a share in the good developments within us and within the humanity. Thanks to our free will, we may lend to Allah who does not need any help at all, even though we may spend what we have entirely for ourselves. These are big favors given by our Creator as said in the following verses:

O you who have believed, if you help Allah, He will help you and plant firmly your feet.
(Quran: 47/7)

Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He may multiply it for him many times over? And it is Allah who withholds and grants abundance, and to Him you will be returned.
(Quran: 2/245)

But when Jesus felt [persistence in] disbelief from them, he said, “Who are my helpers for [the cause of] Allah?” The disciples said, “We are helpers for Allah. We have believed in Allah and testify that we are Muslims [submitting to Him].”
(Quran: 3/52)

Indeed, the opportunity to help Him, to indicate and to put into effect the will to help Him, is one of His biggest favors to us. And a key factor in this favor is our free will.

8.3.1.2 SINS AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES ARE DELIBERATE CHOICES.

The rewards of complying with the truth and the punishments of complying with the false are determined and declared. So, the ones who choose either the truth or the error choose them altogether with their advantages, disadvantages, opportunities and threats.

Our permanent choices are the alternatives that fit the best with who we are and with our attributes. Our choices are personal, and in many cases from a subjective perspective there is no right, nor wrong: We can choose to bear some bad consequences for some things that we love.

For example a person may choose to smoke while he knows that smoking causes cancer. So when cancer happens because of smoking, he should not blame much anyone other than himself. He chose the personal pleasure of smoking in exchange of the pains of cancer and an early death. While he smokes he may see it as right, or he may smoke even though he sees it as wrong. We may choose not to care about the consequences or the future. We may get pleasure in challenging a bigger power than ourselves, even though this causes big risks. The pleasure of this challenge may be bigger than the consequent fear or pain. Similarly one may choose to challenge the Creator directly or indirectly by not thinking about Him and by taking the risk of hell. In this way, he may want to enjoy this challenge and the pleasure of this life without giving up from any worldly joys.

We have the freedom to temporarily enjoy the evil as we see in the example in the following verses:

And as for Thamud, We guided them, but they preferred blindness over guidance, so the thunderbolt of humiliating punishment seized them for what they used to earn.

(Quran: 41/17)

There are many signs in the heavens and the earth which they pass by;

Yet they pay no attention to them!

(Quran: 12/105)

But at the end we have to be honest and own our choices.

On the other hand, such risky choices relate to the very personality of the chooser. So, the confusion of the disbelievers is deliberate and permanent as noted in the following verse:

And whoever is blind in this [life] will be blind in the Hereafter and more astray in way.

(Quran: 17/72)

So that even if returned after seeing the hell, they would return back to disbelief as mentioned in the following verses:

If you could but see when they are made to stand before the Fire and will say, "Oh, would that we could be returned [to life on earth] and not deny the signs of our Lord and be among the believers."

And even if they were returned, they would return to that which they were forbidden; and indeed, they are liars.

(Quran: 6/27-28)

Therefore for example, an ultimate disbeliever who would know that he would enter the hell because of disbelief would again disbelieve and deny the hell. So the hell becomes a clear choice of the disbeliever, because even if the most convincing sign had been present, such a disbeliever would not believe. The following verses refer to this:

Indeed, those upon whom the word of your Lord has come into effect will not believe,
Even if every sign should come to them, until they see the painful punishment.
(Quran: 10/96-97)

We have been given the freedom to undergo the punishment of the hell in response to what we choose to do. However, it does not seem to be a good idea that one rejects temporarily something in which he will later believe only while feeling it eternally. Nevertheless it is a choice. We human beings generally value the immediate benefits even if their costs or risks in the long run are huge. In the following verses there is a reference to this:

No! But you love the immediate.
And leave the Hereafter.
(Quran: 75/20-21)

Think about people who stay in prison for years just because of an act to satisfy their quick anger. That is because for the short term our feelings are more intense relatively to our logic; and for the long term our feelings are relatively weaker than our logic. So, as emphasized in the following verse patience is important for success:

Allah loves the patient.
(Quran: 3/146)

On the other hand, we approve things in the destiny. In every one of our choices we “buy” and approve what is in the Register for us:

And Allah created the heavens and earth in truth and so that every soul may be recompensed for what it has earned, and they will not be wronged.

(Quran: 45/22)

8.3.1.3 ALLAH DOES NOT NEED TO FORCE ANYTHING UPON US

He is Able to do all things.

(Quran: 67/1)

Allah is able to do whatever He wills. So, He may create us in a certain environment where we can be all believers or disbelievers even though we have free will. Therefore He does not need to interfere with our wills or to force us in a certain way, although He can do these.

Allah does not need to interfere with our will process as with objective events we may be led or misled according to who we are. Allah may lead or mislead with objective things, without distorting our choosing capacity. For example, a disbeliever who has a baby may become a believer upon experiencing the excitement and happiness brought by that baby and such a great favor of the Creator.

8.3.1.4 ALLAH DOES NOT FORCE ANYONE TO BELIEVE OR TO DO GOOD WORKS AND HE DOES NOT FORCE ANYONE TO DISBELIEVE OR TO BE UNJUST.

Had Allah wanted to force anything upon us, He might make us all believers. However, forced belief would not be real belief. Belief that is claimed only after resurrection will be forced belief, so not a real belief and it will be useless as mentioned in the following verse:

Do they [then] wait for anything except that the angels should come to them or your Lord should come or that there come some of the signs of your Lord?

The Day that some of the signs of your Lord will come no soul will benefit from its faith as long as it had not believed before or had earned through its faith some good. Say, "Wait. Indeed, we [also] are waiting."
(Quran: 6/158)

Belief in this life is real belief because it is not the consequence of compulsion, and it reflects exactly who and how we are. Thus Allah gives us what we choose.

What I would choose if I was not forced is the result of free will. So, as Allah does not force anything upon us and as He does not charge us anything beyond our capacity, we have reasonable free will so that we may be responsible.

8.3.1.5 NOBODY WILL BEAR WITNESS THAT ALLAH HAS FORCED US TO EVIL

There may be no witnesses who will bear witness that Allah has forced any choice upon us by interfering with our

willing process. No witness will testify that Allah forced us to a certain choice because any potential such compulsion would be known only by Allah. The disbeliever also is indirectly a witness to the fact that Allah did not force him to act in a certain way as he exceptionally takes into account Allah for his decisions. On the contrary he always makes his own calculations for his own decisions. And the disbeliever mostly goes astray from the right way that Allah shows him.

8.3.1.6 ALLAH DOES NOT HAVE ANY PREJUDICE AGAINST ANY OF US

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.
Praise [and thanks] be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds,
(Quran: 1/1-2)

Allah is the Beneficent and Merciful Lord of all. He does not have any prejudice against any of us as everyone is the servant of Allah. If we consider the numerous, huge, and apparent favors of Allah to each of us, we would understand that Allah would not be unjust to any of us:

Then He proportioned him and breathed into him from
His spirit and made for you hearing and vision and
hearts; little are you grateful.
(Quran: 32/9)

8.3.1.7 THE CAUSALITY RELATIONSHIPS THAT ARE THE BASIS OF OUR WILLS GOVERN THE DESTINY

Some say: “Alright, if I am destined to enter the hell then I cannot change it. So why would I bother?” But the

destiny is not the initial cause. Before and above destiny there is Allah. He defines and enables the relationships between entities and events as seen in the example in the following verses:

And that there is not for man except that [good] for which he strives,
And that his effort is going to be seen,
Then he will be recompensed for it with the fullest recompense.
(Quran: 53/39-41)

Each relationship that we witness and all of the constituents of our choices are parts of destiny as we may conclude from the following verse:

All is in a clear register.
(Quran: 11/6)

The timing of our graduation from school is in the destiny. It is also in the destiny that our graduation will be as a consequence of passing certain exams. So if we graduate, it is also in the destiny that we will have passed these exams. The destiny is also based on such relationships and the destiny is not a direct cause of this graduation¹³⁹. Likewise, one can neither explain/justify his entry in the hell with the destiny. So, one should neither be hopeless nor sure about his end just because of the destiny. Therefore if we want to graduate, what we will need to do is to study well for the exams. Likewise if we want to enter paradise, we have to do our homework well.

¹³⁹ This is the consequence of the attributes of Allah as “the Wise”, “the Beneficent”. Otherwise the opposite also might have happened.

8.3.1.8 IF WE KNEW THE DESTINY, WE WOULD WANT TO CHANGE IT FOR BETTER.

Even if we knew the contents of the destiny, we would reevaluate it and if necessary we would want to differ from it if we disliked it. So it does not limit our willing and choosing procedures in any case.

8.3.1.9 IF OUR WILLS WERE UNDER THE FULL INFLUENCE OF DETERMINISM, IT WOULD CAUSE US TO BELIEVE.

The causality would also require the belief in Allah.

Suppose a disbeliever is resurrected. He sees that he was wrong. Then, he will understand that everything was caused because of Allah. Then he will see that there was no cause at all for his disbelief.

Accordingly, the chain of causality relationships and a healthy/deterministic process of consideration would lead to the belief in Allah. Otherwise, things that were not real would have led him to disbelief, not Allah.

Then if unreal things may not have a deterministic influence on him, it will be apparent that he had free will and that he has abused the free will he was given.

8.3.2 THE KNOWLEDGE OF ALLAH REFLECTED IN THE DESTINY IS IN ONE WAY LIKE A HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE IN HUMAN CONCEPTS.

Destiny reflects that the whole power over everything belongs to Allah and that success is only through Allah. So our success or failure depends on Allah and on ourselves prior to the destiny.

The knowledge of Allah about our future is different than we conceive. As Allah is Omni-Present and All-Knower, He knows our future choices as certainly as things that have already happened¹⁴⁰. The example of this knowledge within human concepts is like our historical knowledge:

He is the First and the Last, and the Outward and the Inward; and He is Knower of all things.
(Quran: 57/3)

The Romans have been defeated.
In a near land.
And they, after their defeat, will overcome.
Within a few years.
To Allah belongs the command before and after.

¹⁴⁰ Caution: Do not consider this similitude as a description of the attributes of Allah but consider just as an example to help overcome our limitations in understanding. This is just an example to give an idea in common concepts to the one who is not familiar with the concepts of Islam. We do not have the authority and knowledge to categorize the knowledge of Allah as the one relating to the present and the one relating to the future or His knowing as a historical fact. As Allah is incomparable, His knowledge is also incomparable. We do not know the person of Allah except for what is relevant and introduced by Him to us. Allah knows the best.

And that day the believers will rejoice.
(Quran: 30/2-4)

He is the First but also He is the Last. And He is One, He is not partitioned. He is neither limited in terms of space, nor in terms of time. His knowledge is not local like ours'. And this knowledge does not contradict the destiny.

Therefore, Allah knows our future wills as things which already happened under His observation.

So this kind of His knowledge does not require Him to force something on us.

8.3.3 WE ARE RESPONSIBLE BASED ON OUR CAPACITY

Allah does not charge a soul beyond its capacity.
(Quran: 2/286)

Our beliefs are simply the consequences of our wills, choices. We are not required to comprehend the truth entirely. We just see signs. In one way, belief consists of a mental process of choosing; in this respect, there is no difficulty or inability to believe. And Allah does not charge anyone beyond his/her capacity.

8.3.3.1 OBVIOUS FACTS PREVAIL

If someone jumps willingly and knowingly in front of a fast going car and if he gets injured, he cannot blame Allah for being injured. Otherwise a reasonable person would ask him: If you do not want to be injured why you jumped there? If you wanted to be injured why do you blame Allah? In any

case, this discussion will be useless as in any case he will undergo lots of pains and difficulties.

Likewise, Allah has given us billions of signs that show the Truth, and He told us the two ways we can follow and their consequences. For Him all these are obvious.

But for some of us in the present world, they do not appear to be very obvious or appear to be wrong. The main reasons for these are the false deities and powers that such people invented although Allah has given no proof or support about them.

However, once one is resurrected or judged by Allah, it will be apparent for such a person that: The gods he invented, the forces, the relationships, the causes with which he replaced Allah were not absolute, had not their own powers, had no self-sufficiency, and had no justification at all. And it will be understood that what Allah told was and is obvious at all times. Then it will also be apparent that that person was in a clear error and that he was committing a big willful crime. Allah makes reference to these in the following verses:

Then the factions differed from among them, so woe to those who disbelieved from the scene of a tremendous Day.

See and hear them on the Day they come unto Us!
Yet the evil-doers are today in clear error.
(Quran: 19/37-38)

They will say while they dispute therein,
By Allah, we were indeed in clear error
When we considered you¹⁴¹ equal to the Lord of the Universe.

¹⁴¹ False gods

(Quran: 26/96-98)

Clear error essentially does not arise from the object of the error but from the one who makes that error. Clear error requires clear signs on one hand. And on the other hand it requires flaws in the one who makes that error as mentioned in the following verse:

Has there not reached them the news of those before them the people of Noah and [the tribes of] Aad and Thamud and the people of Abraham and the companions of Madyan and the towns overturned? Their messengers came to them with clear proofs. And Allah would never have wronged them, but they were wronging themselves.

(Quran: 9/70)

Therefore, because of the ever-obviousness of the signs of Allah, in the hereafter their consequences will not be protested for being unjust by anyone. The argumentation of the disbelievers on the grounds of justice is not valid because if what they criticize as unjust happens while there are not objective and knowledgeable witnesses against this injustice, this real happening will prove that they have been the real unjust.

8.3.3.2 WE FAIL BECAUSE OF OUR OWN WEAKNESSES.

We fail because of what Allah has not given and which we have not requested from Him, not because of what Allah has given or done.

As we see in the following verses, what Allah has given us as our essence is sufficient for us as long as we keep it pure

and clean:

And [by] the soul and He who proportioned it
And inspired it [with discernment of] its wickedness
and its righteousness,
He has succeeded who purifies it,
And he has failed who instills it [with corruption].
(Quran: 91/7-10)

8.3.3.3 THE DESTINY IS NOT A BARRIER BETWEEN US AND ALLAH -ALLAH IS NEARER TO US THAN THE DESTINY-

Naturally, our present and future requests from Allah are also known by Him while He formed the destiny. Additionally, Allah who responds to our sincere supplications at any stage may respond to them while he makes the destiny as well¹⁴². Allah who knows what we request is always the same as there is no other god and as He is not limited with past or future. There are no two gods one of whom listens to us now, and another one who made the destiny. Neither there is a god who has a different mood now and a different mood while making the destiny. Allah who listens to us and knows us fully now, is He who also knows us and our present situation fully while making the destiny.

As a participant inside the destiny, and as the maker of the destiny, Allah has one consistent will for a specific situation both while making the destiny and while executing. In both perspectives He has no limitations of knowledge, He

¹⁴² Caution: Of course it is not possible to define the acts of Allah by our very limited concepts of time. Therefore consider these as examples intended just to give a very broad understanding or to give some food for thought.

has no before Him, no after Him. Therefore, for Him there is no reason for contradiction, or difference or limitation for a certain situation. For example, for a person who now in our timeframe asks Allah for a certain wish, Allah did not have less knowledge and was not unaware of him and his wish while He made the destiny. So, while we pray to Allah for something, there are no limitations of destiny for us at all, with our supplications we can reach Allah as He makes the destiny as well.

We can always ask Allah as Solomon (Peace be upon him) asked Him that He helps us and inspires us good deeds:

So [Solomon] smiled, amused at her speech, and said, My Lord, enable me to be grateful for Your favor which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents and to do righteousness of which You approve. And admit me by Your mercy into [the ranks of] Your righteous servants.
(Quran: 27/19)

One might ask: “If I do not believe in Allah then I cannot ask Allah for help. So, I cannot overcome destiny and I will be destined to destiny. So is it fair that I am punished?” In Islam the initial state is the pure state where there are no false gods as in the situation of Abraham (Peace be upon him); but the man invents false gods and these prevent him from seeking refuge in the True God as in his statement related in the following verses:

He¹⁴³ said, “Do you worship that which you [yourselves] carve, while Allah created you and that which you make?”

¹⁴³ Abraham (Peace be upon him)

(Quran: 37/95-96)

A person who believes in false gods blocks himself from contacting the one who makes also the destiny. So he needs to choose to return to Allah, to the initial pure state, and to avoid the false gods that he himself has invented as stated in the following verse:

And that which she was worshipping other than Allah had averted her [from submission to Allah]. Indeed, she was from a disbelieving people.
(Quran: 27/43)

8.3.4 OUR CHOICE PROCESS MUST BE CONSISTENT

A person who blames Allah for his choices would be inconsistent within himself:

If such a person is able to blame Allah for his evil choice and its consequences, then why does he approve the evil choice he makes and its consequences? Why does not he repent? Does he want the way and the help of Allah or not?

If he approves his evil choice and its consequences why does he blame someone else? If he does not want the help of Allah how can he blame Him?

We cannot claim that something that we “criticize” makes us “think” something wrong.

On the other hand, punishment is in one way the reflection of the crime back upon the criminal. So the criminal cannot protest. If he does this crime toward the victim and if it is unjust why does he do it against the victim? If it is

something acceptable why would he protest against it when it is reflected back upon him?

8.3.4.1 THE AGREEMENT IS NOT CHANGED AFTER IT HAS BEEN EXECUTED

And the Day those who disbelieved are exposed to the Fire [it will be said], “You exhausted your pleasures during your worldly life and enjoyed them, so this Day you will be awarded the punishment of humiliation because you were arrogant upon the earth without right and because you were defiantly disobedient.”
(Quran: 46/20)

As we mentioned previously, we make our choices freely and Allah approves them and He gives what we ask against the price we are ready to pay or the risk we take.

A person may choose to enjoy the present life and to be satisfied with it instead of getting the pleasure of Allah and the paradise. Then every day the agreement is partially executed and confirmed. Every day the person reaps some benefits of the agreement and affirms it. The person has the freedom to choose or change his direction or the agreement until he/she dies. The death is the total conclusive point in the execution of one main part of the agreement. From then on the other part of the agreement will be executed. Until the death, the execution of the worldly part of the agreement will be completed. If the person is satisfied with what happened, then there is nothing wrong from his point of view and nobody to blame. This is totally personal as in the case of a person who enjoyed smoking even though because of smoking he died of cancer in the end.

And the implementation especially of the positive

clauses of the agreement for the disbelievers is completed in this world: He may have enjoyed being free from thanking the Lord, from not feeling any responsibility toward Him; he may have enjoyed all the pleasures that he wanted. As any protest for injustice will be really happening only after the agreement has been executed, the disbeliever will not be able to protest in the hereafter. That is because at that point, an essential part of the agreement, good for the disbeliever from his perspective will have been already executed. An agreement may not be protested after its positive clauses for one of the parties is implemented as we see in the following verse:

And [when] the true promise has approached; then suddenly the eyes of those who disbelieved will be staring [in horror, while they say], “O woe to us; we had been unmindful of this; rather, we were wrongdoers.”

(Quran: 21/97)

8.3.4.2 IF ONE BLAMES ALLAH ON THE GROUNDS OF JUSTICE, THIS MEANS THAT ALLAH HAS ALREADY OFFERED HIM THE GUIDANCE BUT HE KNOWINGLY REJECTED IT

On the other hand, the one who blames Allah on the ground of justice would have been acquainted with the value of justice by Allah. So when he is unjust this means that knowingly he is choosing to be unjust, not because of Allah. If he promotes justice, then first he must be just toward Allah and others.

8.3.4.3 THE END RESULT PREVAILS

In the Quran there is this statement:

Likewise did those before deny until they tasted Our punishment.

(Quran: 6/148)

Here we see an emphasis on the situation of the real occurrence of the punishment. Imagine a disbeliever enters the hell. At that moment he will either believe in the hell or not. If he believes, then he will have believed based upon his own observation and Allah does not interfere with his decision to believe or not, exactly as in this world where we are free to choose. He chooses based on his own calculations and observations. This is the case in the above verse. If he does not believe, then naturally there is nothing and nobody to blame. And in the following verses there is a relevant quotation from a speech toward the disbeliever in the hereafter:

“This is the Fire which you used to deny.

Then is this magic, or do you not see?

[Enter to] burn therein; then be patient or impatient it is all the same for you. You are only being recompensed [for] what you used to do.”

(Quran: 52/14-16)

The truth is related to what ultimately happens. When what happens is seen, one can neither put forth an argument which contradicts what happens nor bring forward an argument which is above and outside the knowledge of Allah. For example, when a disbeliever is about to enter Hell, he cannot claim that Allah has been unjust, because his claim will be only personal, and his reasoning and its flaws will have

been already known by Allah. If one claims to know better than Allah that there is injustice while he is being punished for his injustice, then this is because of his arrogance and he is wrong. On the other hand, in the present world he cannot claim such an injustice against himself because he does not believe in Allah.

8.4 IF ALLAH IS ALL-POWERFUL AND GOOD WHY IS THERE SUFFERING AND EVIL?

And Allah is ever Knowing and Wise.
(Quran: 4/111)

Allah is Wise. Whatever He does, is based on reasons according to His perspective. The things that we see as negative in this world are also with reasons.

On the other hand the present phase is a temporary phase which will end at a certain deadline. It is a preparatory phase with its many dimensions including the physical, biological, social, individual dimensions for the permanent phase in the hereafter. So, what we see in this phase is just a small part of the whole picture.

In many cases the cause of disbelief is the rejection of things that are against some personal feelings. In many cases the cause of disbelief is the rejection of what is observed, as in the statement: "I do not believe in a god who makes a child of an innocent father die". This means that such a person would believe in god only with the condition that no children died. In other words he would believe if god is exactly according to his wishes. According to Islam, observation prevails and Allah is not according to our wishes, He is according to Himself and to a certain extent according to what we observe. That is because there is a relationship between

what we observe and Allah.

In general suffering is the consequence of Allah's taking back what He has given. As there is no god other than Him, He does not take something that was given or created ultimately by someone else. It is He who gives, and it is He who has the right to take back what He gives. For example, for some people the death of a person who has children may be considered as something that must not happen. However, Allah who has given that person his life and those children their father can naturally take back what He has given them. We cannot claim to be more merciful than Allah who makes billions of creatures live. And we cannot oblige Allah to give as we want.

Beings and events are not entirely good or entirely evil. There are positive aspects and negative aspects in many cases. Again while something is bad for someone, it may be good for someone else. Allah is not just the Lord of those who live at a certain time; He is the Lord of all, including those who live and those who will live. Older generations will leave to open room for the new ones. This also enables things to change generally for better. There is reference to these facts in the following verses:

Say, "O Allah, Owner of Sovereignty, You give sovereignty to whom You will and You take sovereignty away from whom You will.

You honor whom You will and You humble whom You will.

In Your hand is [all] good. Indeed, You are over all things competent.

You cause the night to enter the day, and You cause the day to enter the night;

And You bring the living out of the dead, and You bring the dead out of the living.

And You give provision to whom You will without account.”

(Quran: 3/26-27)

In many cases, evil is seen as evil because it is less good compared to a better situation; although this evil situation is essentially good and satisfactory. For example, if a person who owns 100 apartments loses 90 of them because of an earthquake, he may be very unhappy. However, many people would be very happy if they owned only one apartment.

In some cases things that we see as evil may be mostly good. Many things that we see as bad may produce many positive outcomes. For example, for some students it may be a nightmare to fail in some exams. But if there was no risk of failure in exams then education outcomes would be less satisfactory. The following verse refers to this fact:

But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah Knows, while you know not.

(Quran: 2/216)

The evil or the good are subjective in many cases. The ultimate goodness or evilness of something will be determined according to the one who is all-Knower.

Also because of the weaknesses we have as human beings, certain events may look much worse than they really are. When we see an innocent baby die, we may be very hopeless, because we are not able to create; but for Allah it is very easy to create him again.

A group of evil consists of crimes that are willfully committed by human beings like murders, frauds, robberies. Evils among these which are not balanced in this world will

be fully compensated on and after the judgment day and the balance will be established both for the criminal and the victim. There is a reference to this in the following verse:

And We place the scales of justice for the Day of Resurrection, so no soul will be treated unjustly at all. And if there is [even] the weight of a mustard seed, We will bring it forth. And sufficient are We as accountant. (Quran: 21/47)

So, for example one may say that Allah must not allow that a person steals the good of someone else. If this stealing is seen as the whole story, then it would certainly be totally unjust. However, it is not the whole story. This situation arises because Allah empowered the human beings, and gave them the freedom to choose their individual and social decisions. So such evil deeds belong to the human beings, and they have consequences. Allah established sanctions against such deeds in this life as a guidance to us. On the other hand, in the hereafter as mentioned in the above verse the balance will be fully established. So the whole picture is beautiful and balanced, although the small part that we see may sometimes look ugly and unbalanced.

So, the considerations from limited or subjective points of view may be misleading about the relationship of evil and Allah. In this context, the good and the evil which are relevant for each of us should be determined according to the situation of our relationship with Allah. For example a person who is in a great welfare at a certain time but in bad shape in his relationship with Allah may not be considered in fact to be in a good situation. Likewise, a person who has serious health problems but who is in a good relationship with Allah is in fact in a good situation. All troubles other than problems in our relationship with Allah are temporary. In the following verses we see an example about this fact:

Indeed, Qarun was from the people of Moses, but he tyrannized them. And We gave him of treasures whose keys would burden a band of strong men; thereupon his people said to him, “Do not exult. Indeed, Allah does not like the exultant.

But seek, through that which Allah has given you, the home of the Hereafter; and [yet], do not forget your share of the [present] world. And do good as Allah has done good to you. And desire not corruption in the land. Indeed, Allah does not like corrupters.”

He said, “I was only given it because of knowledge I have.” Did he not know that Allah had destroyed before him of generations those who were greater than him in power and greater in assemblage? But the criminals, about their sins, will not be asked¹⁴⁴.

So he came out before his people in his adornment. Those who desired the worldly life said, “Oh, would that we had like what was given to Qarun. Indeed, he is one of great fortune.”

But those who had been given knowledge said: “Woe to you! The reward of Allah is better for he who believes and does righteousness. And none are granted it except the patient.”

And We caused the earth to swallow him and his home. And there was for him no company to aid him other than Allah, nor was he of those who [could] defend themselves.

And those who had wished for his position the previous day began to say: “Oh, how Allah extends provision to whom He wills of His servants and restricts it! If not that Allah had conferred favor on us, He would have caused it to swallow us. Oh, how the disbelievers do not succeed!”

¹⁴⁴ Because their sins are known.

(Quran: 28/76-82)

Therefore, as long as one submits to Allah and follows His guidance, everything is good for him. As said in the Quran:

What comes to you of good is from Allah, but what comes to you of evil, [O man], is from yourself.
(Quran: 4/79)

From the perspective of human beings, if we have certain strength, certain values and if we trust in Allah, the things that we consider as negative for us in the first sight will make us stronger. For example suppose that someone had a health problem and he is patient and asks Allah for help. In this case there will be a stronger relationship between him and Allah and Allah will appreciate that and increase his degrees in His paradise. Such troubles will activate, enhance, and make emerge our inner powers as pity, patience, and our love for Allah and for others. But of course such effects will not be same for everyone. Some will go against Allah because of such events as if they are superior to Him. So such events will serve as tests as well. This is concisely explained in the following verses:

And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits.
But give good tidings to the patient, who, when disaster strikes them, say, "Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return."
Those are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy. And it is those who are the [rightly] guided.
(Quran: 2/155-157)

8.5 WHAT ARE THE MAIN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY?

As the source of the messages of the Prophets Muhammad, Moses and Jesus-Christ (Peace be upon them) is the same, the essences of their messages are the same¹⁴⁵. However, contemporary mainstream Judaism and Christianity differ to some extent from the original teachings of Moses and Jesus-Christ (Peace be upon them). Therefore there are differences between Islam and those religions. And as we see in the following verse, Islam invites the Jews and the Christians to the very essence of these messages:

Say, “O People of the Scripture, come to a word that is common between us and you that we will not worship except Allah and not associate anything with Him and not take one another as lords instead of Allah.” But if they turn away, then say, “Bear witness that we are Muslims [submitting to Him].”

(Quran: 3/64)

So in the following parts we will explain the main differences based on the essentials:

¹⁴⁵ Sequentially the nearest major religion to Islam is Christianity, and it is a well-known religion. So the comparison between Christianity and Islam will give an idea about the difference of Islam from other religions as well. As Judaism has lots of common points with Islam and Christianity, we will make certain comparisons as to include Judaism as well. On the other hand, in part 3.1.1.1 we made a general comparison about the essentials of Islam and the essentials of other religions.

8.5.1.1 THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

In Christianity the understanding about god is as follows: In the concept of god there are three persons who are said to be one. Some Christians understand it as three parts forming a whole. Some of them understand it as one god with three forms. Some of them understand it as a god who has transformed temporarily into a human being¹⁴⁷. Some of them understand it as three persons who have the same goal¹⁴⁸... The two parts or forms of this unity are males, similar to human beings and represented generally as white people at certain ages. The other one is a ghost. At least one of them proceeds from the other one although they are all primordial; for some there is no sequential priority among them. At least one of them was born and died. This death happened so that there is a sacrifice and so that god is able to save the human beings from sin. There are other common features between some parts of this god and other creatures, such as having parts as eyes, ears, nose, mass...

According to Islam Jesus-Christ (Peace be upon him) never said such things. He taught similarly as Muhammad (Peace be upon him). According to Islam God is one. He does not consist of forms, versions, and different persons. He is

¹⁴⁶ For proof of Allah see the last edition of the e-book "Unitary Proof of Allah Under the Light of the Quran" by Ender Tosun. The book is available for free on the internet.

¹⁴⁷ Some of the Christians understand the concept of god so that there is only one god, Jesus-Christ being only a human being and a messenger. We will omit this group in our comparison as they are not the majority.

¹⁴⁸ Jesus-Christ says in John 14/28 that his Lord is greater than him.

unlike anything. In Islam, Allah is the Lord of all, He is not a human being, He is the God of all universes. He is the God of an ant, but also He is the God of any galaxy, and He is neither male nor female. He is beyond what we can imagine. We cannot compare Him with a human being.

In the following verse Allah clearly rejects trinity:

So believe in Allah and His messengers. And do not say, “Three”; desist it is better for you. Indeed, Allah is but one God. Exalted is He above having a son.
(Quran: 4/171)

8.5.1.2 RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

On the other hand, in Christianity god is subdued to human beings in certain ways. In Christianity God sacrifices his son for the human beings.

According to Judaism and Christianity there is an organic relationship between God, Jews and Christians. But according to the Quran, neither the Jews nor the Christians do have any privileges or any special relationship with Allah. The following verse explains this:

But the Jews and the Christians say,
“We are the children of Allah and His beloved.”
Say, “Then why does He punish you for your sins?”
Rather, you are human beings from among those He has created. He forgives whom He wills, and He punishes whom He wills.
And to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them, and to Him is the [final] destination.
(Quran: 5/18)

According to Christianity success is through Jesus Christ (Peace be upon him). But according to Islam there are objective criteria that have to be fulfilled in order to be successful as explained in the following verse:

It will not be in accordance with your desires [Muslims], nor those of the people of the Scripture [Jews and Christians];

Whosoever works evil, will have the recompense thereof, and he will not find any protector or helper besides Allah.

(Quran: 4/123)

8.5.2 PROPHET

According to today's mainstream Christianity Jesus-Christ (Peace be upon him) is a god. According to Judaism he is a false prophet and a liar. According to Islam he is a human being and a messenger of Allah and the messiah as explained in the following verses:

They have certainly disbelieved who say that Allah is Christ, the son of Mary. Say, "Then who could prevent Allah at all if He had intended to destroy Christ, the son of Mary, or his mother or everyone on the earth?" And to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them. He creates what He wills, and Allah is over all things competent.

(Quran: 5/17)

The Messiah, son of Mary, was not but a messenger; [other] messengers have passed on before him. And his mother was a supporter of truth. They both used to eat

food. Look how We make clear to them the signs; then look how they are deluded.
(Quran: 5/75)

The statements of Jesus-Christ (Peace be upon him) in John/12/49-50 make it clear that he said that he was a messenger. In those verses he clearly says that: He has not spoken of himself, but that the Lord who sent him gave him a commandment about what to say and what to speak. And that whatever he speaks, he speaks just as the Lord has told him.

Again as we see in John/17/11, the relationship of Jesus-Christ (Peace be upon him) to Allah is in his language mostly a similitude, and their unity is a unity in terms of his obedience to his Lord: In this verse, he asks the Lord to protect the believers in His name so that they may be one, as he and the Lord are one.

According to Islam, Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) is only a human being like us as clearly and concisely clarified in the following verse:

Say, (O Muhammad) “I am only a human being like you, to whom has been revealed that your god is one God. So whoever would hope for the meeting with his Lord let him do righteous work and not associate in the worship of his Lord anyone.”
(Quran: 18/110)

A human being is like a point when we compare to the earth; the earth is like a point when we compare it to the solar system; our solar system is like a point when we compare it with our galaxy; our galaxy is like a point when we compare it to billions of galaxies that have been discovered up to now; and all those galaxies are maybe like a point within our space-time and our universe; and our space-time is maybe like a

point when we compare to the space-times and the universes that Allah may have created; and all these are much less than a point when compared with what Allah may create and sustain. So how is it possible to assign a similarity between Allah and a human being who is so weak when compared with what Allah created? And how a human being may be said to be His son?

Additionally, according to the Quran, Jesus (Peace be upon him) was neither killed nor crucified¹⁴⁹ as explained in the following verses:

And for their disbelief and their saying against Mary a great slander,
And [for] their saying, “Indeed, we have killed the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, the messenger of Allah.” And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but it appeared so unto them. And indeed, those

¹⁴⁹ Both before and after the advent of the Quran there have been the following different beliefs as to the death of Jesus-Christ (Peace be upon him). Some believed that someone else was crucified instead of Jesus. Some believed that he was put on the cross but he was not dead there. The majority of the Christians believe that he was killed on the cross. In any case, even when we read the Gospels, there appear lots of questions about whether Jesus was crucified or not: For example: How the last call and words of a messenger like Jesus Christ could be “My God, My God, why did you forsake me?” as mentioned in Matthew/27/45-47 and Mark/15/34-35? How could he die on the cross in three hours, while the other two persons with him were alive although in the same situation, and although it might take up to 9 days for some persons to die on a cross? Why the Roman Prefect Pontius Pilate was amazed when it is said that he was dead? Why Jews doubted his death? Why there were lots of statements that he was alive even after the crucifixion (Mark/16/11). Again some philological studies show that the word “cross” did not mean in the time of Jesus-Christ the shape that Christians imagine today.

who differ over it are in doubt about it. They have no knowledge of it except the following of assumption. And they did not kill him, for certain.
(Quran: 4/156-157)

8.5.3 METHODOLOGY

The trinity believed by mainstream Christians raises questions as: If god has a father does he have a mother as well¹⁵⁰? If there is a father god then who is the father of this father? Who coordinates among the father and son especially if there are conflicts? If they are same why there are three persons? If they are not same how are they one...? If there are more than one parts or forms of God how do we know that there is not a fourth part or form or another god? Who created the nose, eyes... of Jesus (Peace be upon him)? Are they self-creator and if so through what process? If they are self-creator then why would we believe in a god when we see similar things in the universe?¹⁵¹

Such questions are very important in that they relate to the methodology of the individual who chooses the religion. These questions are also important in that they relate to the very essence of the concept of “God”. For example, if someone believes that his t-shirt is the god, then probably what he means by the concept of god would be very different than what a Muslim or a Christian means by the concept of god. So for this person the concept of god is just an arbitrarily chosen concept with no clearness. So, he is not led by what he

¹⁵⁰ In some denominations of Christianity, Mary (Peace be upon her) is also worshipped, as she is considered as the mother of god.

¹⁵¹ Because of such questions, in Christianity there are denominations which differ a lot even in the fundamentals.

observes in the universe and by a logical process.

When one cannot explain to himself such questions by the use of coherent logic, then he accepts the answers and the belief without questioning, namely just through dogma¹⁵². So if it is without questioning, then why would not he choose another faith or disbelief without questioning? However, in Islam almost every Muslim believes that he should and can defend his belief by the use of logic as shown in the Quran.

8.5.4 HOLY BOOKS

In the old and new testaments there are prophecies about future messengers and messages of Allah. For example in the Old Testament/ Deuteronomy/18/18-19 we read: “I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.”

And in the New Testament/ John 16/12-13 Jesus-Christ (Peace be upon him) says: I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the spirit of the truth¹⁵³, is come, he will guide you into all truth:

¹⁵² Therefore, anyone who looks for the truth, should first of all decide about the methodology he will follow. For example, does he adopt a methodology based on logic or on the acceptance without questioning? Through the second methodology it will probably be easier to decide, but there will be no reason in living it and inviting others to it, because all other religions chosen this way will have at least the same validity. Additionally the second methodology will be less safe as it cannot be sufficiently discussed.

¹⁵³ As already explained, spirit also means human beings or prophets. Furthermore, in John 16 we see: when he comes he will

for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.

So, it is clearly understood from the words of Jesus-Christ (Peace be upon him) that there was a need for a future divine message and a future messenger¹⁵⁴. So the message of Jesus-Christ (Peace be upon him) has not been fully received by his community. For Jews who still expect the Messiah to come also there are major things to be fulfilled; so for Jews

lead you, but the holy spirit had already come. according to the gospels. Again, John 16/7 Jesus says “Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you”; this proves that the paraclete is not the Holy Spirit, since the holy spirit was and at least could be present along with the presence of Jesus. On the other hand, if the Holy Spirit is God in accordance with trinity, then it has to be omnipresent. Therefore, its existence cannot be dependent upon the departure of Jesus-Christ. Also, the verb hearing was used for the Paraclete, while the physical hearing of the alleged spirit part of God entails that there is a physical separation between the persons of the alleged trinity.

¹⁵⁴ Some Christians may consider the prophesied personality as the Holy Spirit. However, seeing lots of sins committed in the Christian world -it happens in other religions as well-, the functionality in terms of guidance of a holy spirit, considered to be part of god, is difficult to understand. If it is understood as a guiding spirit over the church, then the intermediary function of the church clergy and its privileges would be confirmed within Christianity; but in Islam such a privileged group in this world in the sight of Allah is not acceptable. Again, if the prophesied person is considered to be the Holy Spirit, then it would speak of himself; why a so called part of god would not be able to speak of himself, and would say only what he hears? If the prophesied person is the Holy Spirit, then clearly nobody would be able to say that the three gods are one god in the same time. In this case there would be three gods, because each would have clearly separate abilities. Additionally, if the Holy Spirit leads with its totally different nature when it comes, what would happen before it came?

also Judaism is not complete yet. However, with Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) the message of Allah has been completed for mankind in the clearest and most complete way as we see in the following verses:

This day I have perfected for you your religion,
And completed My favor upon you,
And have approved for you,
Islam as religion.
(Quran: 5/3)

Muhammad is not the father of [any] one of your men,
but [he is] the Messenger of Allah and last of the
prophets. And Allah has full knowledge of all things¹⁵⁵.
(Quran: 33/40)

So, as the Quran is the final divine message, unlike the previous holy books, Allah gives the guarantee that He will protect it:

Indeed, it is We who sent down the Quran and indeed,
We will be its guardian.
(Quran: 15/9)

And historically it was protected. Today everywhere we have one Quran which is in the original language in which it was revealed. But for example the earliest available copies of the New Testament are in Greek. However Jesus-Christ (Peace be upon him) spoke essentially Aramaic and maybe some Hebrew. Anyone who worked on technical texts in

¹⁵⁵ After the Quran through Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) there have not come any holy books supported by clear miracles like those with him, Moses and Jesus-Christ (Peace be upon them).

different languages would know very well how much it is critical to have a text in the original language in order to correctly study its meaning.

8.5.5 TOLERANCE

Christians mostly consider Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) as a false prophet. Jews mostly consider Prophets Jesus-Christ and Muhammad (Peace be upon them) as false prophets. Muslims believe in Prophets Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad (Peace be upon them) as true and respectable messengers of Allah. Furthermore to believe in them is a requirement of being a Muslim.

Judaism puts emphasis on a nation; Christianity emphasizes a person in history. Before them there were other nations and persons. However the message of Islam is not an original message, it is not a local message and it is universal; and Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) is not an original messenger of a new faith as underlined in the following verse:

Say, "I am not an innovation among the messengers, nor do I know what will be done with me or with you. I only follow that which is revealed to me, and I am not but a clear warner."
(Quran: 46/9)

8.5.6 LIFESTYLE

In Islam there is no intermediary between Allah and an individual. Allah is the Near. He is nearer to anyone even than his parents. Therefore there is no intermediary religious class in Islam. So for example if the imam is not present in a

mosque, an engineer who knows how to pray can lead the prayer. Nobody can claim to have any privileges in the sight of Allah. To claim this is a big sin.

Therefore there is no monasticism in Islam. In fact, as we are informed in the following verse, the monasticism does not exist either in the very origin of Christianity:

Then We sent following their footsteps Our messengers and followed [them] with Jesus, the son of Mary, and gave him the Gospel. And We placed in the hearts of those who followed him compassion and mercy. But the Monasticism which they invented for themselves, We did not prescribe for them: [We commanded] only the seeking for the Good Pleasure of Allah; but they did not observe it with due observance. So We gave the ones who believed among them their reward, but many of them are defiantly disobedient.
(Quran: 57/27)

As we see in the following verses even in the religiously most important day of the week, Muslims are recommended to go to their work after the Friday prayer which lasts for approximately half an hour:

O you who have believed, when the call is made for the prayer on the day of Friday, then proceed to the remembrance of Allah and leave trade. That is better for you, if you only knew.
And when the prayer has been concluded, disperse within the land and seek from the bounty of Allah, and remember Allah often that you may succeed.
(Quran: 62/9-10)

A person who does his business in a righteous and just way with the intention to get the pleasure of Allah is

considered to be praying. This statement of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) is a good indication in this respect: “The truthful and honest tradesman will be with the prophets, truthful persons and martyrs on the Day of Judgment¹⁵⁶.” So, in Islam worldly life and religious life are combined.

While there is no religious class and monasticism in Islam, everyone is expected to have a strong relationship with Allah. The frequent daily prayers are a good example in this respect.

Salvation in Christianity is believed to be through Jesus-Christ (Peace be upon him). So for example a person who does evil deeds but believes in Jesus-Christ (Peace be upon him) as god, is in a better situation than someone who believes only in Allah as god and does good deeds. So the effect of doing good deeds is limited in Christianity.

In Christianity it is believed that certain human beings are intermediaries between God and others. In Christianity the initial act in this respect is that God sacrificed his son and/or became a human being in order to save mankind. On the other hand, in certain denominations there is the practice of confession in which people confess their sins to certain people in order to be forgiven. However in Islam, there is no intermediary between Allah and an individual.

8.5.7 ORIGINAL SIN

In Christianity there is a belief in the original sin. This belief is as follows: The first man and woman committed a sin. The following generations inherit that sin. To remove that

¹⁵⁶ Tirmizi

sin there needs to be a sacrifice. The god in order to save the human beings whom he loved a lot, gave his son as sacrifice. So thanks to his son human beings can get rid of the sin.

According to Islam the concept of the original sin is not acceptable: The first man and woman sinned. However they asked for forgiveness because of that sin and Allah forgave them. The following verse refers to this:

Then Adam received from his Lord [some] words, and He accepted his repentance. Indeed, it is He who is the Accepting of repentance, the Merciful.
(Quran: 2/37)

So there is no sin to be inherited by others.

Furthermore, in Islam sins are not inherited. So every child is born pure and clean from any sins that his parents may have committed. In the Quran Allah gave many examples in this respect: For example Prophet Abraham (Peace be upon him) was the son of a disbeliever; the son of Prophet Noah (Peace be upon him) was a disbeliever.

Allah does not need to give any sacrifice in order to forgive someone. As long as a person sincerely asks for forgiveness, regrets his sin, tries to cancel his bad deeds by doing good deeds, and improves himself he may be forgiven by Allah. One of His names is the Forgiver.

On the other hand in Islam nobody will bear the burden of sin of another one as long as there is no cause and effect relationship. So, Jesus (Peace be upon him) is not required to bear the sins of others.

8.6 IS THERE ANY PROPHECY IN THE PREVIOUS HOLY BOOKS ABOUT PROPHET MUHAMMAD? IF THERE IS WHAT IS IT?

Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him as they know their own sons. But indeed, a party of them conceal the truth while they know [it].

(Quran: 2/146)

So if you are in doubt, [O Muhammad], about that which We have revealed to you, then ask those who have been reading the Scripture before you. The truth has certainly come to you from your Lord, so never be among the doubters.

(Quran: 10/94)

In the Old and New Testaments there are many prophecies about Prophet Muhammad as Allah explains in the Quran. The Old and New Testaments were written many centuries before Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) was born. Even in today's unoriginal and indirect texts of these Holy Books we may see many of such prophecies. Some of these prophecies are as follows¹⁵⁷:

¹⁵⁷ We explained prophecies regarding Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) in Deuteronomy 18/18 and John 16/12-13 in parts 3.4.2, 3.5.2.3 and 8.5.4 of this book, therefore we will not repeat them here. We will limit our explanations only to the Old and New Testament, and we will not discuss prophecies about Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) in the holy books of other religions.

8.6.1 RELEVANT INFORMATION ABOUT PROPHET MUHAMMAD AND THE QURAN IN DEUTERONOMY/33

In the following verses, we see a reference of Moses to himself, to Jesus and to Muhammad (Peace be upon them.) and their locations. Regarding Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him), there is a reference also to the conquest of Mecca of Prophet Muhammad with his approximately 10.000 friends. Again in the following verses there is a reference to the law Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) brought - the law based on the Quran-.

The verses in Deuteronomy 33/1-2 are as follows: And this is the blessing, wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death. And he said The LORD came¹⁵⁸ from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them.

The Bible informs and confirms that Prophet Moses received revelations from Allah in the Mount of Sinai¹⁵⁹; that Jesus Christ lived and received revelations from Allah in

¹⁵⁸ As God is not limited with space, this was not the coming of God, but the coming of God's word. And the following respective verbs in the verses show a follow up within a plan.

¹⁵⁹ The verses of Exodus 19/1-3 are as follows: In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount. And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel

Judah defined also with the mount Seir¹⁶⁰; and that a Prophet would receive revelations from Allah in the region Paran which also overlaps with today's Mecca (Written also as Bacca in the Quran), and that he will accomplish a big success with 10.000 people, and that he will bring a law. We see that for the last message of Allah the verb shine has been used, while for Moses and Jesus the verbs "come" and "rise" have been used respectively. The use of the verb shine reminds us of the prophecy Jesus explains as "he will guide you into all truth" in the Gospel of John verse 16/13. Again this reminds

¹⁶⁰ The following verses of the Bible show the link of Jesus-Christ (Peace be upon him) to the location called Seir. The verses of Joshua 15/1,10-12 are as follows: This then was the lot of the tribe of the children of Judah by their families; even to the border of Edom the wilderness of Zin southward was the uttermost part of the south coast. (...) And the border compassed from Baalah westward unto mount Seir, and passed along unto the side of mount Jearim, which is Chesalon, on the north side, and went down to Bethshemesh, and passed on to Timnah: And the border went out unto the side of Ekron northward: and the border was drawn to Shicron, and passed along to mount Baalah, and went out unto Jabneel; and the goings out of the border were at the sea. And the west border was to the great sea, and the coast thereof. This is the coast of the children of Judah round about according to their families.

The verses of Matthew 2/1-6 are as follows: Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

us of the guarantee Allah gives in the Quran that He will protect the Quran, as this book will be conclusive, manifest and final for all.

In the following verse in Habakkuk 3/3 also there is a reference to a revelation coming from the region Paran.

The verse of Habakkuk 3/3 is as follows: God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise¹⁶¹.

8.6.2 RELEVANT INFORMATION ABOUT PROPHET MUHAMMAD IN GENESIS 21/9- 21 AND GENESIS 17/19-20

Above we emphasized the point that after Jesus Christ there will be a bigger fulfilment in terms of the communication from Allah. In the following we will link this fulfilment more specifically to Prophet Muhammad thanks to some information we find in the Bible:

In the following verses from the Bible, we see that the place where Ishmael had settled was Paran. Again Allah says in the following verses that from Ishmael He will make a nation. Today there is no known nation from Ishmael other than the one community known according to Islam. And according to the history of Arabian Peninsula, Ishmael lived in Mecca, and Muhammad came from the offspring of Ishmael (Peace be upon them) and lived in the same region.

¹⁶¹ Remember the calls to prayer recited aloud throughout the earth, in thousands of mosques every second. These calls contain also the name of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him). Indeed the earth was and is full of his praise, like no other human being's praise.

The many remnants and locations in Mecca, the knowledge that is available thanks to the strong tradition of communication of genealogies from generation to generation in Arabia support this very clearly. Therefore we know clearly that the prophetship of Prophet Muhammad who lived in Paran region, and his accomplishments overlap very well with the following prophesies.

It is clear from the following verses of Genesis 21/9-21 that the place where Ishmael the ancestor of Prophet Muhammad lived is called Paran¹⁶².

These verses are as follows: And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking. Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac. And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son. And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called. And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away: and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba. And the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs. And she went, and sat her down over against him a good way off, as it were a bow shot: for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lift up her voice, and wept. And God heard the voice of the

¹⁶² Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) was born, lived mostly and received the Quran for the first time in the place where Ishmael lived, namely the Paran region.

lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? Fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation. And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink. And God was with the lad; and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer. And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran: and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt.

The verses of Genesis 17/19-20 support also that the offspring of Prophet Ishmael will have important accomplishments. These verses are as follows:

And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.

8.6.3 RELEVANT INFORMATION ABOUT FINAL PROPHET AS EXPLAINED IN ISAIAH 42/1- 12

In the following verses we see another prophecy about a messenger as the bringer of another law. Certainly Jesus-Christ did not come with a new law. In the following verses we see also that the message this prophet will bring is called “a new song”, this complies perfectly with the music embedded in the Quran and its frequent recitation. Again in the following verses we see that this messenger is related to

the location of Kedar¹⁶³, the son of Ishmael. Again we see a specific reference to the loud praises and calls to prayers in the statements “the cities thereof lift up their voice”, “let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains”. And everything else in the following verses comply with Prophet Muhammad’s achievements.

The verses of Isaiah 42/1-12 are as follows: Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit¹⁶⁴ upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles¹⁶⁵. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law. Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; To open the

¹⁶³ In the verse Genesis 25/13 the two sons of Ishmael (Peace be upon him) are called Kedar and Nebajoth. This verse is as follows: And these are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations: the firstborn of Ishmael, Nebajoth; and Kedar, and Adbeel, and Mibsam,

¹⁶⁴ One of the names of the Quran is the Spirit. The word “Spirit” is also used for the angel Gabriel who mostly related the Quran to Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him).

¹⁶⁵ Gentiles is a term used in the Bible generally for pagans and non-jewish people. This also complies totally with the fact that the people in which Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) was born were pagans, and Prophet Muhammad related the message of Allah mainly to such people.

blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images. Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them. Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof. Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory unto the LORD, and declare his praise in the islands.

In the following verse we see a reference to Kaba in Mecca or Bacca¹⁶⁶, the sacrifices performed there in pilgrimage. We also see that the house of Allah's glory is related to Kedar and Nebaioth, the two children of Ishmael.

The verse of Isaiah 60/7 is as follows: All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee: they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory.

8.6.4 A BIG DEVELOPMENT WILL HAPPEN AND THE KINGDOM OF ALLAH WILL BE TAKEN FROM THE JEWS AND GIVEN TO ANOTHER NATION AS SAID IN MATTHEW 21/42-44

In the following verses Jesus-Christ (Peace be upon him) clearly says that the kingdom of God shall be taken from

¹⁶⁶ Bacca is the other name of Mecca.

Jews and given to another community. We expressed earlier in the context of Deuteronomy 18/18 that Allah will raise a certain messenger from among the brethren of the Jews.¹⁶⁷

The verses of Matthew 21/42-44 are as follows: Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, the stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

8.6.5 THE REFERENCE TO MECCA (BACCA), THE PILGRIMS, THE WELL OF ZAMZAM, THE QUICK AND STRONG GROWTH OF MUSLIMS IN PSALMS 84/4-7

In the following verses there is a reference to Mecca (which is written also as Bacca in the Quran), to the pilgrimage therein, to the water of Zamzam given to Hagar and her son Ishmael (Peace be upon them), the strengthening and strong growth of Muslims.

The verses of Psalms 84/4-7¹⁶⁸ are as follows: How

¹⁶⁷ Deuteronomy 2/4 states that the Edomites who are not Jews, but descendents of Esau, son of Isaac, are the brethren of the Jews. That verse is as follows: "And command thou the people, saying, "Ye are to pass through the border of your brethren the children of Esau, who dwell in Seir; and they shall be afraid of you. Take ye good heed unto yourselves therefore." (KJ21)

¹⁶⁸ Holman Christian Standard Bible®, Copyright © 1999, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2009 by Holman Bible Publishers.

happy are those who reside in Your house, who praise You continually. Selah. Happy are the people whose strength is in You, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage. As they pass through the Valley of Baca, they make it a source of springwater; even the autumn rain will cover it with blessings. They go from strength to strength; each appears before God in Zion.

8.6.6 THE ADVOCATE WHO WILL COME AFTER JESUS

Gospel of John 14:25-31 is as follows:

25 “All this I have spoken while still with you. 26 But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. 27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

28 “You heard me say, ‘I am going away and I am coming back to you.’ If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. 29 I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe. 30 I will not say much more to you, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold over me, 31 but he comes so that the world may learn that I love the Father and do exactly what my Father has commanded me.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁹ New International Version (of the Bible) at

The statements of New Testament "The Helper" or "The Comforter" or in some Gospels or "The Advocate" are translations of the word "Paraclete". According to Harvey (1970), an interpretation of The New Testament¹⁷⁰ "Paraclete" is explained as follows: "This was not "advocacy" in the western, professional sense: the paraclete influenced the judge's decision, not by his knowledge of the law (for this was the judge's business) but by the weight of his personal authority as a man enjoying the esteem of society." Now, if we consider that Muhammed means literally-exactly "Praised" (Hmd: Praise, Muhammed: Praised), we will understand that the name Praised/Muhammed would fit better instead of Comforter; in this way, Christian thinkers would be relieved also from an awful task of explaining what Paraclete means. Also, note that Jesus Christ (PBUH) spoke Aramaic, not Greek; but Paraclete is a Greek word; hence, the very word he used may be "Ahmad" as told in the Quran which means the "most praised" or the "highly praised":

And [mention] when Jesus, the son of Mary, said, "O children of Israel, indeed I am the messenger of Allah to you confirming what came before me of the Torah and bringing good tidings of a messenger to come after me, whose name is Ahmad." But when he came to them with clear evidences, they said, "This is obvious magic."

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+14&version=NIV> Accessed on: 13.12.2021

¹⁷⁰ Harvey, A. E., Companion To The New Testament, Oxford Univ. Pres [ISBN:193261608]-Cambridge Univ. Pres. 1970

(Quran: 61/6)

“Ahmad” is also a popular name of Prophet “Muhammad”; both “Ahmad” and “Muhammad” are the forms from the same root “hmd”.

One may argue that the word spirit is used for the Paraclete. However, this is not a valid argument since the word spirit is also used in the Bible for prophets, as human beings. For example, verses 1 John 4:1-2 are as follows: “Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2 This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God.”¹⁷¹ Hence, in the terminology of the Bible, it is a common usage that a prophet may be called as spirit of God meaning prophet of God, or a person who brings a message from God. Hence, the term “holy spirit” used for the paraclete who will come perfectly means holy person or holy prophet or a person who communicates the message of God.

8.6.7 THE WIDELY KNOWN SPECIAL PROPHET WHO WILL COME AFTER JESUS IN JOHN 1/20-21, 29

In the following verses we clearly see that there was an expected prophet other than Jesus-Christ, and other than John (Peace be upon them). And it is clear that that prophet is a

¹⁷¹ New International Version (of the Bible) at <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+John+4&version=NIV> Accessed on: 13.12.2021

widely known and special prophet as for him the statement “that prophet” is used.

The verses of John 1/20-21 are as follows: And he (John) confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No.

And as we see in the verse John 1/29, Jesus-Christ was present then. The statement in this verse is as follows: The next day John sees Jesus coming unto him.

The verses of John 1/20-21 show that the figure of a key prophet prophesied in the other verses in this part was still expected during the time of Jesus (PBUH).

The verse Genesis 49/10 is one of the OT verses related to that. That verse is as follows: “The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be.” Shiloh in this verse means “messenger”; The Latin Vulgate translates the word as ‘he ... that is to be sent’¹⁷². “Shiloh” is interpreted by Christians as the Messiah. However, this is not possible since Jesus (PBUH) was also a jew and the verse says that with the with the Shiloh, the scepter will depart from Judah.

8.7 WHAT ARE THE POINTS TO BEAR IN MIND WHILE READING THE QURAN?

The Quran is the word of the Creator who is not harmed at all if we do not choose to follow His guidance, and who

¹⁷² [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shiloh_\(biblical_figure\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shiloh_(biblical_figure))
Accessed on: 23.10.2023

does not benefit from our being guided. The Quran is a favor from our Creator as we see in the following verse:

Recite (the Quran), and your Lord is the most Generous.
(Quran: 96/3)

He has given us the freedom to choose His guidance or not. Therefore, the Quran is a guidance for the righteous, not for all. This is stated in the following verse:

Indeed, Allah is not timid to present an example that of a mosquito or what is smaller than it. And those who have believed know that it is the truth from their Lord. But as for those who disbelieve, they say, "What did Allah intend by this as an example?" He misleads many thereby and guides many thereby. And He misleads not except the defiantly disobedient.
(Quran: 2/26)

Had Allah willed to unite all human beings around the Quran, He could easily do it. But He does not force anyone in this way. Therefore the serious and the sincere will benefit from it. So while studying the Quran, one has to bear in mind certain points:

Firstly one must not miss the essential messages for the sake of the details. Most people have a tendency to be lost in details. We are recommended by Allah to have a wide vision. There is a reference to this in the following verse:

He it is Who has sent down to you the Book: In it are verses [that are] precise, they are the foundation of the Book; others are allegorical. But those in whose hearts is perversity follow the part thereof that is allegorical, seeking discord, and searching for its hidden meanings,

but no one knows its hidden meanings except Allah. And those who are firmly grounded in knowledge say: “We believe in the Book; the whole of it is from our Lord:” and none will grasp the Message except men of understanding.
(Quran: 3/7)

There are many translations of the Quran. There are limitations of the translations as they are translated by human beings. Although they are sufficient in giving the essential messages of Islam, occasionally they may contain mistakes or they may limit the meanings. Even translators who had Ph. D.’s and so on may have missed details existing in the original text. On the other hand most languages do not have the detail level of Arabic. For example there are different forms of the pronoun “they” in Arabic for each group of two males, two females, more than two males, more than two females. All these different forms of “they” are generally reflected in an English translation only with the word “they”.

Therefore for a serious and detailed study of the Quran, one should have more than one translation or should use an explanation of the Quran which includes etymologies of the words, cross-references, and examples...

While reading the Quran one must take it as a whole. While each statement fits in its context, it may also explain another verse in another part of the Quran. For example, reading in a verse about the creation of the heavens and the earth in six days may confuse one. However, reading the statement in the following verse will clarify that the day in the sight of Allah is not like our day:

A day with your Lord is like a thousand years of those which you count.
(Quran: 22/47)

Or after reading the statement in the following verse the reader will understand that the day for Allah is not only defined by the rotation of the earth around itself:

The angels and the Spirit will ascend to Him during a Day the extent of which is fifty thousand years.
(Quran: 70/04)

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COMMENTS

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tosunender@gmail.com

<http://www.facebook.com/guidetounderstandingislam>

Indeed, those who have believed and done righteous deeds they will have the Gardens of Paradise as a lodging,

Wherein they abide eternally. They will not desire from it any transfer.

Say, "If the sea were ink for [writing] the words of my Lord, the sea would be exhausted before the words of my Lord were exhausted, even if we brought the like of it as a supplement."

Say, "I am only a human being like you, to whom has been revealed that your god is one God. So whoever would hope for the meeting with his Lord let him do righteous work and not associate in the worship of his Lord anyone."

(Quran: 18/107-110)

By time,
Indeed, man is in loss,
Except for those who have believed and
done righteous deeds and advised each
other to truth and advised each other to
patience [and perseverance].
(Quran: 103/1-3)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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