

State of Mankind

How God sees us, how we see ourselves:

Introduction into Qur'anic Universalism

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For my wife Assya, my friends Amina, Edip, Aisha, Tariq and for a better world.

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1400 years ago a message was delivered to mankind. The message claimed to come from a divine source, and by its simple, social, liberating and justice creative potential, it soon spread all over the world in a speed unprecedented in the history of the human race, that cannot be simply explained away as conquests through force¹. Jerusalem was taken without any force, nor were the rights of Christians and Jews decreased but even increased, Christians from other sects and Jews were allowed in the holy city for the first time since the second century when the Romans had banned them from the city². The first rulers of this world community were chosen democratically based on their honesty, humility and moral character, and the decisions were decided democratically (42:38, 3:159, 4:58). These rulers tried to treat everybody under their protection as equals. Khalif Ali ibn Talib, the fourth ruler, told his governors to be righteous towards their brothers in faith and morality (*Din*), but he asked them to be more even more righteous for their equals in creation (*Khulq*), meaning every human being, whatever their faith or race³. This behaviour clearly represented the Qur'anic view of *democratic pluralistic social politics* (49:13, 3:110-115, 5:48, 60:8, 42:38-43). Sadly, soon after new rulers came to power who took away the democratic elements, and based ruler ship on heritage (absolutist monarchy) which influenced the theological and judicial development of Islam⁴. Also the Judeo-Christian, Persian and pagan doctrines were dominant among the people under Islamic rule for the first three centuries of Islam. Only in the 10th century did Sunni Islam became the dominant religion in the Islamic empire⁵, after it had taken up the dogma's and doctrines of the other religions and traditions⁶.

And so today we have ended up in a new age, one were we can decide to renew our approach and understanding of the Qur'an, without our mind being constraint by dogma or doctrine. In this modern globalized age we have access to almost all accumulated knowledge of the human race, and have a more realistic look at the universe and its Initiator. The universe has slowly constructed itself up to a point so life could emerge and evolve to the highly intelligent beings we are, and so also has our thinking evolved to higher levels where we can look beyond traditions, myths, races and see that all of mankind have been developing towards our new age of interconnectedness. All civilizations on earth, past and present, created ideas about the divine, and have traditions of interacting with it. Civilizations in the past created dogma's around their concept of the divine, making it thus not possible to interact with other civilizations except in hostile ways. Today through the studies of comparative religion and anthropology we know that almost all human ideas of the divine are based on wrong understandings of the construct of the universe, but at the same time having concepts of an absolute divinity⁷. Now we are understanding nature, and now we are moving beyond simplistic understandings of the Divine. To understand the Qur'an being a communication from the divine Absolute, it must adhere to certain requirements, certain standards. It must also confirm to a realistic outlook on nature, and also promote rationality to truly understand

¹ Page 33, Oosterse Dagen, Arabische Nachten (Eastern Days, Arabic Nights) by M.Heirman (2004).

² Volume 6, The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire by Edward Gibbon (1862).

³ Famous quote of Alī ibn Abī Tālib to his governor Malik Al-Ashtar: "*Infuse your heart with mercy, love and kindness for your subjects. Be not in face of them a voracious animal, counting them as easy prey, for they are of two kinds: either they are your brothers in religion or your equals in creation.*"

⁴ Page 218, Vol 1, The Venture of Islam by Marshall Hodgson (1974): "*The Caliphal state stood now as a more mundane imperial power, no longer directly based on Islam.*"

⁵ Page 67, Defenders of Reason in Islam by R.Martin & M.Woodward (2003).

⁶ Page 289, The Heritage of Persia by prof. Richard N. Frye (2004): "*In a sense Islam had to change before the Persians accepted it, but one might also say that just as Greek civilisation served as a vehicle for Christianity, so did Iranian civilisation for Islam.*" Page 277-279, Ibid: "*The list of Sasanian influences on all phases of Islamic culture and civilisation would be too long to include here.*"

⁷ Page 31-33, Man and his Gods-Encyclopedia of the world's religions (1971). History of God by K.Armstrong (1993). An Interpretation of Religion by John Hick (2004).

nature⁸, as mankind is diverse, their understanding of the divine Being is diverse and so the Qur'an must be universal in accepting and respecting these different developments⁹.

And now we are exchanging global human thought and finally learning to really listen to each other, we must also see if we are truly listening to the Divine. The Qur'an explains:

41:53

سنريهم آياتنا فى الاءافاق وفى انفسهم حتى يتبين لهم انه الحق اولم يكف بربك انه على كل شىء شهيد

We will show them Our signs/messages ('ayatinaa) in the horizons (al'afaaqi), and within themselves/beings/lives (anfasikum), until it becomes clear (yatabayyana) to them that this is the truth/the right thing (al-Haqqu). Is it not enough that your Developer is witness over all things?¹⁰

This verse alone suffices to show that the Qur'an demands we as mankind must constantly reflect and in a sense rediscover the Qur'an a time after time. This verse uses the plural noun *الاءافاق al-Afaq*, from the root *afaqa* meaning *a horizon, land beyond eyesight, borders, utmost level or degree, to excel or go beyond, an extremity, farthest parts, the wide or whole world*¹¹. It is also used in verses 53:7 and 81:23 where it clearly is used for the utmost border of reality and human experience¹². In 41:53, the horizons clearly stands for the borders and regions of the world, experiences and knowledge of mankind, to remind us that the Qur'an is still manifesting itself, the best understandings and applications are slowly being discovered over time and that every age, every generation, every people being a horizon, which is doing the act of *يتبين yatabayyana*. This is the imperfect verb of *bayana*, to make something *clear, manifest, obvious or distinguished*¹³. Imperfect means it is an act that is not completed yet, and so it is clear the Qur'an is still manifesting itself. As in the words of scholar Muhammad Shahrur 'The form is permanent, but the content moves'¹⁴, the Arabic text is fixed but the reader, and the world of the reader, is always different.

And so the *آيات ayat*, signs or messages, will be a manifestation that the Qur'an is *الحق al-Haqq*, which literally means *A door that fits perfectly in its frame so the door can turn round properly*¹⁵, and thus gives us a visual definition of the word that means something that *fits the situation, is proper, just, true, suitable, correct, valid, necessary, sound, binding*¹⁶. It is something that is suitable for its purpose, the best possible way something can be done. And this is how the Qur'an presents itself, but it explains we must also not accept it on face value, but research its contents (4:82). The Qur'an must be examined so it can truly manifest itself. We, as Muslims, have failed to comply to this demand, as although we have 1400 years of

⁸ And it does: 17:36, 3:190-191, 45:3, 16:12-18, 29:20, 21:30 etc.

⁹ And it is: 49:13, 2:62, 5:69, 2:256, 11:115-117 etc.

¹⁰ All the translations in this essay made by the author.

¹¹ Page 105-106, Volume 1, Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon (2003). Page 24, Dictionary of the Holy Qur'an by A.M.Omar (2006). Page 25, A Concise Dictionary of Koranic Arabic by A.Ambros (2004) mentions that in 41:53 "It probably refers to the whole world".

¹² 53:7 While he (Muhammad) was at the highest horizon. 81:23 He (Muhammad) saw it at the clear horizon.

¹³ Page 322-326, Volume 1, Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon (2003).

¹⁴ قراءة معاصرة (al-Kitab w'al-Qur'an:qira't maasir) by Muhammad Shahrour (1991).

¹⁵ Page 243, Volume 2, Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon (2003). Page132 المفردات فى غر بيب القرآن (Al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Quran) by al-Raghib al-Isfahani (1110) says: *المطابقة و الموافقة كمطابقة رجل الباب فى لدورانة The best fitting and the best adapted socket for the door in having a right rotation.* Translation by AY Mol.

¹⁶Page132-133 المفردات فى غر بيب القرآن (Al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Quran) by al-Raghib al-Isfahani (1110). Page 241-246, Volume 2, Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon (2003).

exegesis in multiple forms, they are mostly repetitions of old horizons. We have failed to use our current horizons in the manifestation of the Qur'an, and thus making the Qur'an مهجورا *mahjooran* (25:30). The Arabic lexicon writer Raghib says it literally means:

الھجار حبل یشد به الفحل فیصیر سببا لھجرانہ الابل و جعل علی بناء العقال و الزمام و فحل
د به مهجور اي مشدو

'al-Hijaar is a *hablun*/rope tightened on a male camel so it becomes a reason to hijraanihi/leave it behind/abandon al-Ibila/the tied up one. And [it also means] make upon it al-Aqalla a cord used for hobbling the feet of camels, and ([t also means] al-Zamaamil/bridle/tie up a camel. And a male camel is mahjooran/a left behind thing after being tied up.'¹⁷

To put it simple, a *mahjooran* is a thing that is tied up/made immobile so it can be left behind or controlled. We Muslims have made the Qur'an fixed in meaning and potential, so it can't move together with the development of mankind. This will be the biggest accusation and complaint of the Prophet Muhammad against mankind (25:30)¹⁸, and this is also the only occurrence of an accusation against Muslims by the Prophet himself in the future tense.

We live in a time in a time of an unprecedented horizon, a time of globalization and technology that has dragged evil to new heights, but also the goodness and potential of mankind. A global awakening is occurring where self-determination, freedom, sharing of resources and knowledge is bearing beautiful fruits. And when we can overcome the evils, a paradise is awaiting us. For as long as writing has existed, war has been its main subject. And for the last 200 years, archaeology and anthropology has confirmed this as an always present part of humanity. Man is a war-loving creature. The Qur'an mentions this in the story of creation (2:30) whereby the الملكة *al-Mala'ikat*, the universal forces, label us as a blood spilling creature. But God replied to their accusation: انى اعلم ما لا تعلمون **"Verily, I have knowledge of what you do not have knowledge of"**. Thus saying that God knows the true potential of mankind that is not obvious to everyone.

In 2008 I had the pleasure of meeting Douglas Fry, professor of Anthropology in Denmark, and we spend 2 days discussing his theories¹⁹. Anthropology is the study of human cultures, and many studies on ancient human cultures have confirmed the concept of humans being aggressive. But prof.Fry re-examined the previous studies, and concluded that their conclusions were based on wrong statistics and reductionary conclusions. The research already presumed man to be violent and thus made the conclusions fit the preconceived notion. His own anthropological experience with tribes and global human culture created a completely different conclusion. He explains:

"Although war and other types of violence may be very noticeable, a close examination of cross-cultural data reveals that people usually deal with conflict without violence. Humans have a solid capacity for getting along with each other peacefully, preventing physical aggression, limiting the scope and spread of violence, and restoring peace following aggression. [...] The suggestion that peacefulness and the nonviolent handling of conflict predominate in human affairs might seem to be contradicted by daily observations, especially to people who have become accustomed to Hollywood

¹⁷Page 514 القرآن في غريب المفردات (Al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Quran) by al-Raghīb al-Isfahani (1110), translation made by AY Mol. See also تاج العروس (Taj al-Arus) by Husaini al-Zubaidi (1780).

¹⁸ 25:30 And the messenger will say, "O My Sustainer! These are my people, the ones who had disabled this Qur'an making it immobile in potential and thus of no account, making them to leave it behind."

¹⁹ At the 'Understanding Conflicts' conference at Aarhus university. I was their on invitation by prof.Amina Wadud.

films and daily newscasts stuffed with images of murders, rapes, riots, and wars. [...] In other words, violence-saturated programming can contribute to a false, unrealistic violent picture of the world. In actuality, the vast majority of people on the planet awake on a typical morning and live through a violence-free day. The overwhelming majority of humanity spends an average day without inflicting any physical aggression, and, in all likelihood, without even witnessing any physical aggression with their own eyes among the hundreds of thousands of people they encounter. [...] In actuality, one can travel from continent to continent and personally observe hundreds of thousands of humans interacting non-violently. [...] Peace is the norm, violence the shocking exception.”²⁰

Just as the daily news only show the exceptions of global daily life, historical records also only mention war so frequently as these were the turning points in their society. And these turning points did not happen often or were exaggerated over time. We know the ancient cultures and their wars as the Greeks, Egyptians and Romans, but we never hear about for example the ancient Anasazi, who lived in large groups and territories with other culturally and ethnically different groups peacefully for more than a thousand years²¹. And this is a more common norm in human history, not an exception.

Humans from their very early beginning have lived in peace for hundreds of thousands of years. “Archaeologically, there is negligible evidence for any kind of warfare anywhere in the world before about 10.000 years ago.”²² The only old evidences of war are Jebel (10.000BC) and Jericho (8.000BC), and these are still unclear if these finds really represent a war-like scenario.

“Similarly, the belief that ‘there always has been war’ does not correspond with the archaeological facts of the matter. The earliest unambiguous evidence of warfare dates from less than 10.000 years ago, and war becomes more common with the rise of the state several millennia later. [...] that ‘during the hunter-gatherer stage of cultural evolution, which dominated 99 percent of human existence on the planet...lack of archaeological evidence for warfare suggests that it was rare or absent for most of human prehistory.”²³

His ideas (which are shared by several other scientists), resonate with God’s words, and so I started to reflect on this possible new horizon. According to Fry’s conclusion, war is unnatural to mankind, and thus an evil we impose on ourselves. The Qur’an vividly confirms this:

10:19

وما كان الناس الا امة واحدة فاختلفوا

All Mankind (*al-Naas*) were but one community (*al-Ummat wahidat*); then they differed.

The verb كان *kana* is the perfect form of ‘to be’, and its perfect tense doesn’t only refer to the past, but can also refer to an always present state of the subject.²⁴ A good example of this is for example in the verse:

110:3

انه كان توابا

He is ever an acceptor of acknowledging wrong behaviour that incites corrective behaviour (*tauabaa*).

²⁰ Page 21-23, Beyond War: The Human Potential for Peace by Douglas P. Fry (2007). Emphasis mine.

²¹ Page 58, Ibid.

²² Page 60, Ibid.

²³ Page 63, Ibid. Emphasis mine

²⁴ Page 365, Volume 13, لسان العرب (Lisan al-Arab) by Ibn Manzur (1311).

Here *كان kana* refers to always present state of God's attribute of allowing people to return to the right behaviour (توايبا *Tauabaa*). Thus verse 10:19 and similar verses as 2:213 & 11:118 show that mankind are united in their being humans, and that this indeed made them treat each other as direct family²⁵ in the past. But with the grow of the human population and its spread over the different continents, our worldviews started to differ and these differences even created the idea that one group is better then the other. This development is described metaphorically in the story of *Adam*:

2:35

نت وزوجك الجنة وكلا منها رعدا حيث شئتما ولا تقربا هذه الشجرة فتكونا من وقلنا يادم اسكن
الظلمين

**And We told early mankind (*Adam*)²⁶, and its pairing (*Azawja*)²⁷
[i.e. male and female], Reside in this existence where you can find everything for
your nourishment and development (*al-Jannah*)²⁸ and partake the fruit [results] thereof as you
please. But do
not go near the dispute of who is of better origins (*Al-Shajara*)²⁹. Or, you will become those that
displace your goals and equality
from its rightful place being of the oppressors (*Zalameen*)³⁰.**

This verse combines several very important terms, and through this explains them. In the Biblical story, Adam and Eve are told not to eat from the tree of knowledge, but are seduced by the snake, i.e. the devil³¹. In the Qur'an, the story is told very differently as it doesn't

²⁵ The word *umma* comes from the root *umm*, meaning *origins, mother, to treat each other as a mother takes care of her children., group of living things having certain characteristics or circumstances in common*. Page 125-129, Volume 1, Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon (2003).

²⁶ Page 15-17, Dictionary of the Holy Qur'an by Abdul Mannar Omar (2006): *Human skin, Human being, Intelligent Person, Brown Man, Human Race, mankind, Civilized, Person in possession of different powers*. It clearly represents early mankind as *Adam* is identified as being *Khalif*, successor to earlier species (2:30).

²⁷ Page 237, Dictionary of the Holy Qur'an by Abdul Mannar Omar (2006): *That in which individuals are united, makes them mingle, mate, companion, individual when consorting with one another, kind or species, class of sex, pair, couple*. It can stand for everything mankind creates through their mingling, culture and language, or it represents the duality of male and female within mankind. The Qur'an purposely never mentions 'Eve', and thus the *Adam* story in the Qur'an can never be linked to the Biblical account.

²⁸ According to Raghیب is *Jannah* : *A garden with such extensive growth, the ground is hidden by the foliage*. Page 105-106 المفردات في غريب القرآن (Al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Quran) by al-Raghیب al-Isfahani (1110). Thus representing abundance and growth.

²⁹ Page 284, Dictionary of the Holy Qur'an by Abdul Mannar Omar (2006): *Matter of controversy, to fight, dispute, stock or origin of a person, tree, plant having a trunk*. It represents the origins of a tribe or family as for example they say: *Huwa min shajartin tayyibatun*/He is of a good origin/tribe. But because people always fight over who is of better origins, *Shajara* is the symbol of quarrel, in 4:65 it is used for differences: *فيما شجر بينهم* *In their differences between them*. Page 532, Arabic-English dictionary by Hans Wehr (1994): *To develop unrest, to quarrel*. *Shajara* probably became to represent a tree or plant, as the roots and branches represent a family tree, all of mankind coming from one origins then branching out into different groups, or representing the different opinions people have.

³⁰ Page 205-208, Volume 5, Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon (2003). Its authentic meaning is *to misplace something*. Raghیب explains it as *not to keep something in its proper place either by increasing or decreasing it or removing it from its proper place or time*. Page 318-319 المفردات في غريب القرآن (Al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Quran) by al-Raghیب al-Isfahani (1110). This is why several Arabic lexicon writers say that *Zalama* refers to taking away other people's rights (you misplace them) and by doing so, you put yourself above them (misplace yourself), and thus become an oppressor. See also تاج العروس (Taj al-Arus) by Husaini al-Zubaidi (1780) and المحيط (al-Muht) by Butras Al Bustani (1883).

³¹ The Bible, chapter Genesis 2:15-3:6. Ibn Khaldun (d.1406) mentions that the early Muslims *had no books or scholarship and desert attitude and illiteracy prevailed among them. When they wanted to learn something [...] they consulted earlier people of the book (former religions)*. Muqadimah; an introduction to history by F.Rosenthal (1967).

approach Adam as a single individual, but as an archetype, a symbol of early mankind. In 2:36 the dual (*both of you*. Verb ending *Huma*) changes to the plural (*all of you*. Verb ending *Kum*) shows *Adam* and his pairing (*Azawjuka*) represent mankind and its duality of male and female. The term *Jannah* means an overgrown garden and thus representing abundance and growth, and exponential potential (32:17)³² as verse 13:35³³ clearly says it is a allegory, and not a literal place. It represents a state of existence wherein humans can develop and grow²⁴. The term *Shajara* is normally directly linked to the tree of the Biblical story, but in Arabic it has a different original meaning of *to differ*. It was also used for *the origins of a person*. A tree represents both terms as the branches represent the different opinions and beliefs within mankind, and a tree represents the family tree of a tribe or family, and so this is how *Shajara* was also used for a tree or a plant with a long stem²⁵. Scholar G.A.Parwez shows how these two terms (*Jannah* and *Shajara*) explain each other:

“Man prior to his civilized life used to exist on a few needs only and the food supply was abundant: therefore there was no differences between them; later when man began civilized life then it led to clash of interest between individuals and tribes and this led to differences among them. As verse 10:19 explains, mankind was one group earlier but later they began to differ among themselves this is the connotation in verse 2:35 i.e. they were all told that their reality (beginning) was the same, therefore, do not develop mutual differences: but self interests which teaches every individual to protect his own interests (and is a devilish intellect) led them to selfish interests and thus they became each other’s enemy (see 2:36) as such at this point ‘Shajar’ would mean those mutual differences among human beings which arouse because of pursuing selfish interest.”³⁴

Because mankind could not share the resources equally, and even created the idea that certain ethnicities were better than the other, we approached this conflict (*تقرباً هذه الشجرة taqraba hadihi al-Shajarati*) and have become oppressors of another, as we misplaced our share of the resources (took more than we needed) and placed our needs above those from other humans (we misplaced ourselves), and thus became *الظالمين al-Zalameen*²⁶. This is further expressed by the story of the ‘two sons of mankind (*Adam*)’, whereby the one killed the other because his sacrifice i.e. actions that brings one closer to other humans and God, *قرب qaraba*³⁵, were not accepted. Many anthropologists and philosophers of history see this story, which is also mentioned in the Bible³⁶, as the struggle between the hunting and gathering nomadic peoples and the agricultural herder settlers during the Stone Age, called the Neolithic revolution³⁷, which started around 10.000 years ago. The original natural way of life of hunting and gathering which humanoids have done for millions of years, was slowly changed into an unnatural way of life of agriculture, where much stress is put on the available resources in one area.

“In the Near East, between 12.000 and 10.000 BP [years ago. Ed.] hunting-and-gathering subsistence patterns gave way to a new economy based on plant and animal domestication. The archaeological

³² 32:17 And no human being can imagine what blissful delights are kept hidden for them as a reward for what they used to do.”

³³ 13:35 The allegory of paradise that the righteous have been promised is that rivers flow beneath it, and its provisions are continuous as is its shade. Such is the abode of those who were righteous, while the abode of the ingrates is the fire.”

This verse makes clear that both Heaven and Hell are allegorical states of existence in this life and the next.

³⁴ Page 933-934, *Lughat Al-Qur’an* by G.A.Parwez (1960), unpublished English translation.

³⁵ Page 32-37, Volume 7, *Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon* (2003).

³⁶ Genesis 4, the Bible.

³⁷ *The Food Crisis in Prehistory: Overpopulation and the Origins of Agriculture* by M.N. Cohen (1977). Page 98-99, *On the Sociology of Islam* by Ali Shari’ati (1979).

record shows no evidence of war at 12.000 BP and then evidence for sparse war by about 9500 BP, followed by evidence of spreading and intensifying warfare in more recent times.”³⁸

Since then, we as mankind have been in conflict with each other on too many occasions. We are now slowly rediscovering each other through globalization and diplomacy, and slowly becoming one again. This shows also the reason for why God started to communicate with certain individuals (sending Revelation *wahy*, to messengers and prophets), as He wanted to help mankind and guide them through this important and unnatural transition. As the main consequence of this transition was war and oppression, then this must be the main focus of God’s guidance. Maintaining peace, welfare and equality for all humans, this must be the subject and goal of divine communication, i.e. revelation.

17:70

ولقد كرّمنا بنى آدم وحملناهم فى البر والبحر ورزقناهم من الطيبات وفضلناهم على كثير ممن خلقنا تفضيلا

And certainly, We have conferred dignity/honoured (*karramna*) on the descendants of the human species (*bani adam*) and carried them over land and sea, and provided for them sustenance out of the good things of life (*al-Tayibati*), and favoured them far above most of Our creation.

As all humans are honoured, then the diversity of mankind is accepted by God:

49:13

اىل لتعارفوا ان اكرمكم عند الله اياها الناس انا خلقناكم من ذكر وانثى وجعلناكم شعوبا وقبائل لتعارفوا ان الله اعلم خبير

O Mankind (*al-Naas*)³⁹, We created you from a male and female, and We made you into nations (*sh3uba*)⁴⁰ and tribes (*qabali*)³³, that you may understand and know each other (*taarafu*)⁴¹. Surely, the most honorable among you in the sight of God is the most righteous (*atqa*)⁴². God is Knowledgeable, Ever-aware.

³⁸ Page 56-57, Beyond War: The Human Potential for Peace by Douglas P. Fry (2007).

³⁹ Page 120-121, Volume 8, Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon (2003). The authentic meaning of *anusa* is to halt in a place. As the majority of the Semitic people were nomadic, not staying in one place or nation, their word for people who dwelt in one place because of agriculture or trade and created cities, were called *al-Nass*, those that stay in one place. A.M.Omar says the original root is unclear as several scholars say it comes from *anasa*, which means to be familiar and have a connection, from *anusa*, to halt in a place, or *nasiya*, to forget. Page 35-36 and 583, Dictionary of the Holy Qur'an by Abdul Mannar Omar (2006). But as Arabic belongs to the Semitic languages, a nomadic worldview as origin (*anusa*, to halt in a place) is the most likely theory.

⁴⁰ Page 279-282, Volume 4, Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon (2003): to gather or assemble or unite. Page 237-238, Volume 8, Ibid: to accept or meet anyone, to show favour or be near someone. Thus it became a word for tribe. Muhammad Shahrur mentions that Sh3ub and Qabal is indicating a level of social organisation that is superior to the institutions of family, clan and tribe. The nation is defined as a body of people who share the same form of social system but who may differ in their ethnic and tribal origins. Page 477, The Qur'an, Morality and Critical Reason; The Essential Muhammad Shahrur by Andreas Christmann and Muhammad Shahrur (2009).

⁴¹ Page 382, The Qur'an, Morality and Critical Reason; The Essential Muhammad Shahrur by Andreas Christmann and Muhammad Shahrur (2009): “*ta ‘aruf* means mutual understanding, acquaintance, and peaceful co-existence, both between individuals and between groups, states, and nations. It constitutes the purpose of Allah’s creation.”

⁴² Page 313, Volume 8, Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon (2003). Page 618-619, Dictionary of the Holy Qur'an by Abdul Mannar Omar (2006): to protect, save, preserve, ward off, guard against evil and calamity, be secure, take as a shield, regard the duty. A *muttaqii* is one who guards against evil and against that which harms and injures and is regardful of his duty towards human beings and God. You are righteous as a people when you protect your own and other people (you are a shield to them), and you make sure the people of your own nation do not harm others. So you stand on guard to the world and take this as a duty, this is the essence of having *taqwa*. See also page 235-239, God and Man in the Koran by T.Izutsu (1963).

And because we have free will:

11:118-119

ولو شاء ربك لجعل الناس امة وحدة ولا يزالون مختلفين الا من رحم ربك ولذلك خلقهم

And had your Developer so willed, He could surely have made all mankind (*al-Naas*) one single community (*ummat wahidat*): but [mankind has free will] they do not cease in their difference. Except whom your Developer has provided means to evolve (*rahima*)⁴³ upon; and for that He has created them in stages (*khalaqahum*)⁴⁴.

The root *rahima* رحم refers to providing to the needs so such persons can grow and evolve. Mufsarín at-Tabataba'i says it means '*giving and bestowing to fulfill other's need*'. A womb is called *rahim*, as it bestows everything the foetus needs to develop and grow³⁶. Thus development is one of our purposes of existence⁴⁵. We are created with free will as God did not want to control our thoughts (11:118), but having different views doesn't have to stop us from being united in our humanity. God allowed us to evolve in our own way, from hunter-gatherers to farmers to walking on the moon. The people who understand this are the ones evolving as human beings into something greater. We evolve as a species by unifying our different ideas and creativity, and through this benefit each other. Thus verse 10:19 shows us our natural nature and our unnatural behaviour, we are one, but in denial. As the Qur'an calls itself *huddan lil-nass* هدى للناس, a guide for mankind⁴⁶, the unnatural behaviour of war and extreme conflict must be one of its main subjects. And here is an horizon that always has been expressed in traditional Islamic thought, but could not truly reveal itself through the religious and political influences and environments that lacked universal ideals. Now it has true potential and can become clear for us.

The Qur'an states that *al-Din* الدين, the behaviour/custom, is our *fitrat* فطرت⁴⁷, true nature, and that the *Din* is *al-Islam* الاسلام⁴⁸. Normally this is understood as meaning 'submission' is the only religion, whereby submission represents an exclusive dogmatic religion with detailed beliefs and rituals. Thus using the human concept of revelatory purpose, we believe we as humans already know the purpose of the Qur'anic revelation, and how to approach it. But as

⁴³ Page 221-223, Volume 3, Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon (2003). Page 22, tafsir Al-Mizan by Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn at-Tabataba'i, English translation (2006). Page 384, Arabic-English dictionary by Hans Wehr (1994).

⁴⁴ Page 163-164, Dictionary of the Holy Qur'an by Abdul Mannar Omar (2006): *To measure or proportion a thing, to form or make according to proper measure. To measure and form out the thing out of pre-existing matter.* Page 41-42, Volume 1, Exposition of the Holy Qur'an by G.A.Parwez (1990): *Khalaqal adeema means he measured the leather before cutting in order to make some article. [...] Khalaqa therefore means to examine/assess something then remove/take away its excessiveness and make it or shape it according to a design and measurement so that it comes out in perfect balance or ratio/proportion and also becomes smooth and levelled.[...] it means that every time it needs some addition or alteration. That is why 35:1 says "He, according to His Will, keeps on adding something to His creations."*

⁴⁵ 84:19 You (Mankind) shall surely embark from stage to stage."

⁴⁶ 2:185 The month of Ramadan, in which the Quran was sent down as a guide to the people and a clarification of the guidance and the criterion. Therefore, those of you who witness the month shall fast therein. Whoever is ill or traveling, then the same number from different days. God wants to bring you ease and not to bring you hardship; and so that you may complete the count, and glorify God because He has guided you, that you may be thankful."

⁴⁷ 30:30 Therefore, devote yourself to the /way of life behaviour turning away from all that is false. Such is the natural aim of God's creation of humans. And God's law of creation never changes. This is the perfect behaviour but most people do not know.

⁴⁸ 3:19 Remember that the *Din* approved by God is *al-Islam*."

the universe and the Qur'an are from the same الامر *al-Amr*, command⁴⁹, they must reveal the same framework of reality. For example, we know today the earth is ellipsoidal in shape, and if the Qur'an discusses the shape of the earth, then it must confirm this:

79:30

والارض بعد ذلك دحها

And after that He made the earth egg-shaped (*dahaha*).

The verb *dahaha* comes from *dahy* which means egg, and according to classic Arabic lexicons was used for an ostrich egg, which resembles the earth very closely⁵⁰. And we see this truth with the hundreds of verses that discusses the workings and realities of the universe and nature⁵¹. Thus how the Qur'an sees mankind, must also confirm with reality. We are the horizons, and through us the Qur'an can manifest itself as the truth. The Qur'an approaches us as a species which evolved on a planet in the universe, and the universe itself is in constant evolution⁵². We see this concept expressed in the first verses of the first and last *Surah*, chapters⁵³, of the Qur'an:

رب العلمين (*Rabbi al-3lameen*)

رب الناس (*Rabbi al-Naass*)

The word *Rabb* has the connotation of nourishing and developing something until it reaches maturity and perfection⁵⁴. The person responsible in the house to nourish and provide for the people in the house is called *rabb al-dar* (for females *rabbat al-dar*)⁵⁵. The word *العلمين al-3lameen* comes from the root *علم i3lm* and refers to *anything knowable* or *distinguishable*⁵⁶, and by the means it is knowable, whereby it thus refers to the creation which is knowable because of its Creator. The two verses which are the beginning and the end of the Qur'an shows God is concerned with the development of the whole existence and our existence, and shows we are part of the Cosmic evolution. The Qur'an doesn't present a religion, a mostly historical and cultural-bounded framework, but is a guide how mankind can be part of the

⁴⁹ 65:5 This is Allah's *Amr* which He has revealed unto you." 7:54 Your Lord is God who created the heavens and earth in six periods, and then He established the authority. The night covers the day, which seeks it continually; and the sun and the moon and the stars are all subjected to His law (*bi Amrihi*); to Him is the creation (*al-Khalqu*) and the law (*al-Amr*). Glory be to God, the Lord of the worlds."

⁵⁰ Page 23, Volume 3, Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon (2003): *the throwing of a pebble, to expand something and make it egg-shaped as an Ostrich-egg*. Volume 2, A Word for Word meaning of the Qur'an by Muhammad Mohar Ali (2003), M.M.Ali, a professor of the Medina university, confirms this. In North-African Arabic dialects, the verb is still used for egg, but the rest of Arabic speaking nations have lost this meaning. I have confirmed this myself with Moroccan and Tunisian people. The first contact with *Sahaba*, direct followers of Muhammad, introduced Arabic to North-Africa, and as it never came under Abbasid and Ottoman control, it preserved many original classical Arabic words which were lost in the rest of the Muslim world due to Persian and Aramaic influence.

⁵¹ See The Bible, Quran and Science by M.Bucaille, Phenomena of Nature and the Quran by S.A.Wadud.

⁵² See verses 24:45, 21:30, 23:12, 22:5, 84:19, 87:1-3, 29:20, 82:6-7, 6:133, 2:117, 51:47, 50:38, 41:10, 41:11, 27:88, 21:33, 36:40, 10:24, 7:69, 15:28-29, 32:7-9, 71:14-17, 21:104, 14:48 etc.

⁵³ 1:1(2), not all scholars agree if the *Bismilleh* of *al-Fatiha* is to be counted as the first verse. 114:1.

⁵⁴ Page 190-191 *المفردات في غريب القرآن* (Al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Quran) by al-Raghib al-Isfahani (1110): *Foster a thing in such a manner as to make it attain one condition after another until it reaches its goal of completion*. Correctly rendered by M.Ali, The Holy Qur'an, page 4, note 1a.

Page 168-173, Volume 3, Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon (2003): *Caretaker, provider, sustainer, perfecter, maintainer, reposer of properties, developer, the bringing a thing to a state of completion by degrees*.

⁵⁵ Page 5, The Message of the Qur'an by Muhammad Asad (2003).

⁵⁶ Page 423-427, Volume 5, Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon (2003).

cosmic development. It sees us as one species, and although addressing different groups within our species, it only does so with the purpose of showing the mistakes of beliefs or behaviour within these groups that stop them from being part of a united mankind.

It calls divisions in mankind the behaviour of المشركين *al-Mushrikeen*, those that perform شرك *Shirk*⁵⁷. The word means *to mix things up, to share, to hold on or to remain stuck*.

Traditionally it is always understood as simply idolatry, to associate things sharing divine power with God. But the word is more complex as it was also used for ropes/cords (حباله *hibaalat*) used for the ensnaring of birds and animals called شرك *sharak*, a hunter using snares was called شركة *Sharakat*, and the strap/thong of a sandal was called شراك *shiraakun*, as it keeps the toes stuck in the sandal⁵⁸.

This visual definition explains why the word was also used for idolatry, as these people try to ensnare, trap, the divine into a statue or other created objects. But it also refers to the position of these people themselves, as their irrational beliefs and behaviours have trapped themselves, they are stuck in tradition and custom and do not evolve as a people. This is why the most common excuse of *al-Mushrikeen* is that they believe and act as their forefathers⁵⁹.

When we look back at verses 30:31-21, we are told not to become *al-Mushrikeen* by splitting up in groups that are only pleased with themselves, meaning, to disunite mankind is a form of idolatry (as you believe your group is better than the other), and you will stop the progress of mankind, you are ensnaring mankind. This is why this behaviour will be the only one where God will not protect you against its consequences⁶⁰.

This is why the Qur'an rejects exclusivist religious thought, the idea that only one religion with its specific dogmatism and labels will gain you salvation. The Qur'an shows development is based on a few very rational and universal concepts:

2:111-112

وقالوا لن يدخل الجنة الا من كان هودا او نصرى تلك امانهم قل هاتوا برهنكم ان كنتم صدقين
بلى من اسلم وجهه لله وهو محسن فله اجره عند ربه ولا خوف عليهم ولا هم يحزنون

And they claim, "None will enter Paradise unless he is a Jew or a Christian." This is nothing but their wishful thinking. Say, "Bring your proof if you are truthful." No, whosoever inclines to peace with his whole being for God (*aslama wajhahu lillahi*), while being a person who improves the state of mankind (*muhsinun*); he will have his reward with his Developer. There will be no fear over them, nor will they grieve.

The verb اسلم *aslama* has many applications. In pre-Islamic Arabic usage, it referred to *giving over*⁶¹ or *to incline* to something that makes something safe or pure, or *to act peacefully* or *safely* with yourself, a product, or someone else. It meant to being something or give over something precious to you or to someone else, and you or that person, will keep it safe as *salama* refers to safety, wholeness and health⁶². The root word goes as far back as

⁵⁷ 30:31-32 Turn to Him, be aware of Him, hold the *Salat*, and do not be of *al-Mushrikeen*. Or like those who split up their *Din*, and they became sects; each group happy with what it had.

⁵⁸ Page 265-267, Volume 4, Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon (2003).

⁵⁹ 7:70 They said, "Have you come to us to serve God alone and abandon what our fathers had served? Bring us what you promise if you are of the truthful ones!" See also verses 2:170, 5:104, 6:148, 7:28, 10:78 etc.

⁶⁰ 4:116 God will not protect against the consequences (*yaghfiru*) of holding on to traditions (*yashraka*).” The term *ghafara* means to protect, as a *maghfir* is a helmet. It mostly mistranslated as to forgive. Page 57-59, Volume 6, Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon (2003).

⁶¹ Page 199, God and Man in the Koran by T.Izutsu (1963).

⁶² Page 136-141, Volume 4, Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon (2003). Page 894-897, *Lughaat Al-Qur'an* by G.A.Parwez (1960), unpublished English translation.

4000 years ago, where it was used in the Proto-Semitic Akkadian language for *to be unharmed, peace, well-being and welfare*⁶³. It is for example used in the Armana letters, correspondence between the Ancient Egyptian administration and the surrounding nations⁶⁴. The word *وجهه wajhahu* comes from *wajjoo*, face, which represents a person's whole being. Thus *aslama wajhahu lillahi* means to give over your whole being in the struggle for peace for God (you do not endanger or waste God's creation), and you keep yourself and your surroundings safe and healthy. As God is beyond need (112:2), and God's Will is peace (10:25) then giving over to God's Will is giving over to peace. In verse 3:83 we read that all creatures are working to sustain the wholeness of the creation in the service of God, and they do this out of free will (humans and other intelligent creatures), or by force (meaning their instinct controls them)⁶⁵.

Next to this first requirement, we are asked to be a *محسن muhsinun*, a person who does *hassan*, and refers to something or someone *possessing and excels in the qualities of being good, well balanced, properly ordered and being beneficial and pleasing to others*⁶⁶.

In verse 2:62, 5:69⁶⁷ and 41:33 we see similar basic requirements, which makes people be part of the Divine plan, which renders them acceptable for further evolution even after this life:

2:62

ان الذين ءامنوا والذين هادوا والصابئين من ءامن بالله واليوم الءاخر وعمل صالحا فلهم عليهم ولا هم يحزنون اجرهم عند ربهم ولا خوف

Surely those who maintain peace and trust [the Qur'an as being Divine] (*alatheen 'amanua*)⁶⁸, and those who are Jewish, and the Nazarenes, and those who follow other religions (*al-Sabeen*)⁶⁹, any one of them who acknowledge God (*'amanu billah*) and the future period (*al-Yaum al-'akhiri*)⁷⁰, and perform deeds that create justice and peace

⁶³ A Grammar of Akkadian by Huehnergard (2005).

⁶⁴ Page 43, The Armana letters by William Moran. The clay tablets were written over a period of 30 years around 1400BCE. In the letters it was used for describing the gifts sent to each other to maintain the peace, and for wishing each other health and well-being.

⁶⁵ 3:83 Is it other than God's system that they desire, when those in the heavens and the earth have peacefully surrendered to Him (*walahu aslama*) voluntarily or by force? To Him they will be returned."

⁶⁶ Page 124, Dictionary of the Holy Qur'an by Abdul Mannar Omar (2006). Page 252-253, The Qur'an: an encyclopedia by Oliver Leaman (Ed.) (2008). Page 206-208, Volume 3, Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon (2003).

⁶⁷ Which is almost word for word the same as 2:62.

⁶⁸ *Alatheen* (those) that do *'amanua*. From the root *amina*, meaning to trust, protect, create safety. Page 29, A Concise Dictionary of Koranic Arabic by Professor Arne Ambros (2004): *Amina/ya'manu: To be or feel safe, to be safe and secure, not to fear. Mumin: one giving security, rendering safe. Whereas most derivatives of the root '-m-n are genuinely Arabic (to be and create safety), the technical religious meaning of 'believing' appears to have developed under the influence of Aramaic and/or Ethiopic. See also Page 102-103, Volume 1, Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon (2003). Those that trust and maintain Peace (*alatheen amanua*), are people who believe in the divine source of the Qur'an. Thus they are one step further above *al-Muslimeen*, peaceful persons who accept the universal ethics of 2:62 and 6:151-153.*

⁶⁹ Page 364, Volume 4, Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon (2003): *He departed from his religion to another religion like a star changes its position. And thus means to change one's religion. It refers to every person who didn't fall into the Christian, Jewish or your family's religion. In Hadith literature, the Meccan people who rejected Muhammad, called him as a person to be of the *sab'een*, those that changed his original religion. There have been many speculations by Qur'anic commentators who they were, but they couldn't pinpoint a specific group. When looking at the word, it is clear why, as it represents any religious group on earth that falls outside the Abrahamic religions.*

⁷⁰ The word *yaum* refers to *a day or any time period*. Thus *era* or *period* is better rendition. The word *akhir* means *the last in line* (like the last link on a chain) or *something that comes later*, *al-Akhirun* (the later generations) is the opposite of *al-Awwalun* (the previous generations), and thus also refers to future generations

(*3malu salihan*)⁷¹, they will have their reward with their Developer, with no fear over them, nor will they grieve.

41:33

ومن احسن قولاً ممن دعا الى الله وعمل صلحاً وقال اننى من المسلمين

Who is better in saying than one who invites to God, and perform deeds that create justice and peace (*3milu saliha*), and says: "I am one of those who gives over to peace (*al-Muslimin*)⁵⁴."

These verses give the basis for universal shared ideas. To believe in a purpose for existence, to believe that we determine our own future, and then act on those beliefs by creating the peace and balance to create a positive future for all. It doesn't matter if the person is a Christian, Jew, or has any other belief system, if it entails the above minimum requirements, then the person is described as *muslimun*, a person working with his whole being towards peace and wholeness of God's creation. The word صلح *salaha* means to put things right, correct things that are wrong or out of balance. Thus *al-Saliheen* are people who reform the world by creating peace. To be *muslimun* always goes together with performing *salaha*⁷². This universal ethical belief and peace system has always been the same one given to mankind since divine communication began around the agricultural revolution:

42:13

شرع لكم من الدين ما وصى به نوحا والذى اوحينا اليك وما وصينا به ابراهيم وموسى وعيسى ان
كين ما تدعوهم اليه الله يجتبي اليه من يشاء اقيموا الدين ولا تتفرقوا فيه كبر على المشر
ويهدى اليه من ينيب

He has decreed for you the same behaviour/way of life (*al-Din*) He ordained for Noah, and what We inspired to you, and what We ordained for Abraham, Moses, and Jesus: "You shall uphold this custom/way of life (*al-Din*), and do not divide in it." Intolerable for those stuck in their traditions (*al-Mushrikeen*) is what you invite them towards. God chooses to Himself whoever He wills; He guides to Himself whoever turns [into the right direction].

And as mentioned earlier, it is called a natural behaviour. The word فطرت *fitrat* means the original and natural disposition in which mankind was created in⁷³. And so God teaches us our natural state in which humanoids lived for millions of years, in peace and well-being, in *al-Salam*.

30:30

تى فطر الناس عليها لا تبديل لخلق الله ذلك الدين فاقم وجهك للدين حنيفاً فطرت الله ال
القيم ولكن اكثر الناس لا يعلمون

and the future in general of this life and the next. Page 318, Volume 8 and pages 68-69 & 162-165, Volume 1, Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon (2003). Page 21, A Concise Dictionary of Koranic Arabic by Professor Arne Ambros (2004).

⁷¹ The letter ع *Ayn* has been rendered by me as the number 3, the letter is a throat sound which has no equal in English. Page 755-756, Arabic-English dictionary by Hans Wehr (1994): *3mala* refers to acting, performing, doing something or working. Page 438-439, Volume 4, Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon (2003): *To make whole sound, set things right, amendment, reformation, reformer, one who is upright, righteous, a person of integrity, peacemaker, suitable.*

⁷² See for example verse 12:101 where prophet Yousouf (Joseph) says: Cause me to die as a *Muslim* and join me with the reformers (*al-Saliheen*)."

⁷³ Page 114-115, Volume 6, Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon (2003).

Therefore, devote yourself to the right behaviour/way of life (*al-Dinu hanifan*). Such is the natural aim (*fitrat*) of God's creation of humans. And God's law of creation never changes. This is the true way of life (*al-Dinu al-Qayyimu*) but most people do not know.

The word الدين *al-Din* has several meanings depending on the context. In pre-Islamic Arabic it was used mostly for *custom, habit, debt, obligation, requital and obedience*⁷⁴. It was used for a habitual state that kept returning, so that it could become a custom, and thus became an authority which was obeyed. It probably had several original Semitic sources, as Persians used it for *systematic religion*, Jews for *requital*, and Arabs for *custom*⁷⁵. The Arabs used it for example for rain that always fell at a particular place⁷⁶. The word حنف *hanif* means *one who turns away, incline to or have a right state or tendency*⁷⁷. The combination of *al-Dinu hanifan* can thus be best understood as the right behaviour and thought system, the right way of life where people turn away from harmful behaviour. The word *al-Qayyimu* comes from *qama*, which means *to stand firm, maintain something, to uphold, erect or make something straight*⁷⁸. The combination of *al-Dinu al-Qayyimu* can be best understood as the upright way of life or the way of life that upholds the truth or just things. Thus showing that *al-Islam* is not an exclusive religion, but an inclusive universal value system that unites the majority of mankind.

To show the universality of the Qur'anic message, the term *hanif* is used against exclusive dogmatic beliefs:

2:135

وقالوا كونوا هودا او نصرى تهتدوا قل بل ملة ابرهم حنيفا وما كان من المشركين

And they say; "Be Jews or Christians to be [rightly] guided." Say: "No, rather the disposition (*millat*)⁷⁹ of Abraham, who turned away from all that is false (*haneefa*), and was not of those who remained stuck in traditions (*al-Mushrikeena*)."

In the Qur'an, to proclaim superiority over other humans because they are different, is an act of الشيطان *al-Shaytan*, the symbol of everything that is far removed from our true human nature⁸⁰:

38:76

قال انا خير

He said, "I am better than he.

3:64

قل يا اهل الكتب تعالوا الى كلمة سواء بيننا وبينكم الا نعبد الا الله ولا نشرك به شيئا ولا يتخذ بعضنا اربابا من دون الله فان تولوا فقولوا اشهدوا بانا مسلمون

⁷⁴ Page 221, God and Man in the Koran by T.Izutsu (1963).

⁷⁵ Page 220, God and Man in the Koran by T.Izutsu (1963).

⁷⁶ لسان العرب (*Lisan al-Arab*) by Ibn Manzur (1311).

⁷⁷ Page 294, Volume 2, Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon (2003).

⁷⁸ Page 471, Dictionary of the Holy Qur'an by Abdul Mannar Omar (2006). In verse 9:7 it is used to uphold a treaty: ما استقموا لكم فاستقيموا لهم *istaqamulakum fa istagimu lahum* they uphold [the treaty], then you uphold it too.

⁷⁹ Page 257-258, Volume 7 and pages 276-277, Volume 8, Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon (2003): *People united by race or language, creed, religion, disposition*.

⁸⁰ Page 275-276, Volume 4, Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon (2003): *Become distant, far or remote. One excessively proud and corrupt*. It was used for a *deep well* (the water far removed) and a *long rope* (indicating distance).

Say, "O People of the Book [those of previous revelations], let us come to a common statement (*kalimatin sawain*) between us and between you; that we do not serve except God, and do not set up anything at all with Him, and that none of us takes each other as lords (*arbaban*) beside God." If they turn away, then say, "Bear witness that we [at least] have given over to peace and wholeness (*muslimun*)."

This important verse shows that the Qur'an sees people as *al-Muslimeen* if they accept common terms with each other as stated above; that all are seen as equal in the Divine framework (do not set our religion above others) as we all serve God, and none sees one another as *arbaban*, masters or lords that stand above the other, and thus portrays an equality in ethical and metaphysical values. This verse thus shows a universal pluralistic worldview, where we all can work together for peace and welfare equally, whatever the person's religious background.

Shahrur comments correctly on the meaning of this verse:

"The verse says 'O People of the Book!' because Jews and Christians were addressed like this during the time of the Prophet! It also contains the 'common terms' shared by them and Muhammad's followers: worship none but God, no *shirk* and no idolatry, that is, they all rejected *rububiyya* among themselves. It ends with the admission that if they are not happy about this, they 'at least' should bear witness that he (i.e. Muhammad) is a prophet and that they (i.e. his followers) are (still) *al-Muslimeen*. But why did Muhammad want to testify that he and his followers are *al-Muslimeen*? Because he believed that Jews and Christians were themselves Muslims and he saw himself as one of them, even though later on he wanted them to join *al-Iman*, while he allowed them to keep their faith in Allah's *tauhid* (unicity)."⁸¹

The Qur'an makes this clear by referring to Abraham's descendants and Jesus's followers as *al-Muslimeen*:

2:130-132

ومن يرغب عن ملة ابراهيم الا من سفه نفسه ولقد اصطفينه في الدنيا وانه في الءاخرة لمن الصالحين
اذ قال له ربه اسلم قال اسلمت لرب العلمين
ووصى بها ابراهيم بنبيه ويعقوب يبنى ان الله اصطفى لكم الدين فلا تموتن الا وانتم مسلمون

Who would abandon the disposition (*millat*) of Abraham except one who fools himself? We have selected him in this world, and in the Hereafter (*al-'akhirat*), he is of the people who reformed the world to peace (*al-Saliheen*). When his Developer said to him, "Be in non-conflict/at peace [with Me and the world] (*aslama*)" he said, "I accept/am at peace (*aslamtu*) to/with the Developer of all Existence (*al-Rabbi al-3almeen*)" And Abraham enjoined [this] to his children, and so did Jacob, saying, "O My children! Indeed, God has chosen for you the way of life (*al-Din*). Therefore, let not death overtake you except that you are those inclining to peace and welfare (*muslimun*)."

3:52

فلما احس عيسى منهم الكفر قال من انصارى الى الله قال الحواريون نحن انصار الله ءامنا بالله واشهد باننا مسلمون
So when Jesus felt their rejection/opposition (*al-Kufr*), he said, "Who are my supporters (*ansaari*) towards God?" The disciples said, "We are God's supporters, we trust God

⁸¹ Page 358, The Qur'an, Morality and Critical Reason; The Essential Muhammad Shahrur by Andreas Christmann and Muhammad Shahrur (2009). Shahrur uses 'Muslim-assenters' for *al-Muslimeen*, to show the inclusiveness of the term.

(amanna bi Allahi) and we bear witness (ishhad) that we work for peace and welfare, accepting [God's Will] (muslimun)."

To work towards peace, welfare and well-being in the world has always been the message God communicated to the messengers. Now we can better understand this most important verse:

3:19

ان الدين عند الله الاسلام

The way of life/obligation (*al-Din*) with God, is the acceptance of Peace (*al-Islam*).

Normally this is understood as the only 'religion' accepted by God is 'Islam', understanding 'Islam' as a label for an exclusive religion, but now we can understand that *الاسلم al-Islam* refers to an obligation and natural behaviour and thought system, something that is universal for the majority on earth, as it refers to accepting and creating peace and wholeness with your whole being. *Al-Islam* is a verbal noun in the Arabic form of *If3l* (form IV) which refers to the performing of the root meaning described in a noun. An example is *يعلم yulim* informs, is the verb form IV and the verbal noun in form IV is: *إعلام i3lam* information⁸². As the root verb *salama* means peace and well-being, then *al-Islam* is the performing/having of peace and well-being⁸³. Raghīb explains *al-Islam* as:

الدخول في السلم

The engagement/entering (*al-Dukhulu*) into (*fi*) the Peace (*al-Silm*).⁸⁴

And so any person accepting the terms of 2:62 and 5:69, and the universal ethics discussed below, is engaging into Peace and thus part of *al-Islam*. And the above verse makes peace and welfare an obligation for all of mankind.

To be considered righteous (*atqa*) as mentioned in 49:13, the Qur'an gives its own commandments, which Shahrūr considers as the Universal Ethics of *Al-Islam*⁸⁵, global norms and values shared by almost all belief systems:

6:151-153

قل تعالوا اتل ما حرم ربكم عليكم الا تشركوا به شيئا وبالوالدين احسنا ولا تقتلوا اولادكم من املق نحن نرزقكم واياهم ولا تقربوا الفوحش ما ظهر منها وما بطن ولا تقتلوا النفس التي حرم الله الا بالحق ذلكم وصيكم به لعلكم تعقلون
حتى يبلغ اشده ووقفوا الكيل والميزان بالقسط لا ولا تقربوا مال اليتيم الا بالتي هي احسن
نكلف نفسا الا وسعها واذا قتلتم فاعدلوا ولو كان ذا قربى وبعهد الله اوفوا ذلكم وصيكم به لعلكم تذكرون

⁸² Page 88, Arabic Verbs and Essentials of Grammar by J.Wightwick and M.Gaafar (2008).

⁸³ "The words *salam* and *islam* have a relation that is a fairly common one in Arabic. It is found in the forms *Fa'3L* and *If'3L*. Some examples of those same forms include *najah - injah*: Success - making successful. [...], thus similarly, *salam* means *peace* and *islam* means *peacemaking*." Page 166, article 'Introduction to Peacemaking' by Dr.Ayman Abdullah, Critical Thinkers for Islamic Reform by E.Yuksel, F.Peru, A.Mol (Ed.)(2009). So verse 3:85 is understood as: If anyone desires a thought and behaviour system (*al-Din*) other than the acceptance of Peace (*al-Islam*), it will never be accepted from him." This same understanding comes forth in 5:3.

⁸⁴ Page 246, المفردات في غريب القرآن (Al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Quran) by al-Raghīb al-Isfahani (1110).

⁸⁵ Page 37-42, The Qur'an, Morality and Critical Reason; The Essential Muhammad Shahrūr by Andreas Christmann and Muhammad Shahrūr (2009).

وان هذا صرطى مستقيما فاتبعوه ولا تتبعوا السبل فتفرق بكم عن سبيله ذلكم وصاكم به لعلكم تتقون

Say, "Come, let me convey to you what your Developer has made inviolable upon you:

1. Associate nothing with Him (*tushrikoo bihi shayan*).
2. Honor your parents, do good to them, fulfil their needs (*bi-l-Walidayni ihsanan*).
3. Neither kill your children for fear of poverty nor deprive them of proper training and education (*la taqlutu awladakum min im'laqin*). We provide for you and for them.
4. Do not go near immodesty or lewdness (*la taqrabu al-Fawahisha*) whether openly or in secret.
5. Do not slay a life, life that God has made inviolable (*la taqtulu al-nafsa allati harrama Allahu*) - except in the course of justice (*ila bi-l-Haqqi*). This He has commanded you so that you may use your intelligence and reason (*taqiluna*). God commands you further:
6. Do not approach the wealth (*mala*) of the orphan (*al-Yatimi*) except to improve it (*ahsanu*) until they come of age with full maturity of body and mind (*yablughu ashuddahu*).
7. Give full weight and full measure (*awfu al-Kayla*) in all your dealings. Uphold the balance (*al-Mizan*) with Justice (*bi-l-Qisti*). We do not assign any 'self' responsibility beyond its means.
8. And when you voice an opinion, be just (*3dilu*), even if it is against a relative.
9. Fulfil your covenant (*3hdi*) with God.
10. This He commands for you to bear in mind. This is my straight path (*sirati mustaqiman*), Follow it, then, and follow not other ways that take you away from His path. This He has ordained for you so that you live upright (*attaquna*).

The first commandment is the only religious creed of the list, and refers to the duty of understanding that Allah is above and beyond existence. We can philosophize and discuss this subject with other people, as many people have an irrational and childish view on God which does not confirm with the framework of the universe, and are thus stuck in unrealistic ideas, but nobody may ever be forced into accepting a view⁸⁶. We can only truly understand ourselves correctly, when we try to understand the universe and its Creator, as this framework will explain to us His Manifestation⁸⁷. Many people reject religion and faith in a God, because of the irrational ideas perpetrated by many traditional theologies, as they contradict reality (*al-Haqq*).

The second to ninth commands are all ethical values which are shared by all human beings, taking care and protection of the weaker persons among us, to not kill other people, to be honest in all dealings and moments of life, from paying for your gum to testifying in courts, to equal sharing of all resources, foods etc., to hold to our oaths and agreements. This the way we must follow, and these ethics do not contradict our natural disposition (*fitrat*), as this the path which keeps mankind erect (*sirati mustaqim*) and righteous (*attaquna*), and these are the most honourable with God (49:13), and certainly also with all the rest of mankind. The world would be a lot safer and more prosperous if the majority of the people were to uphold these

⁸⁶ See verses 6:104 (Is beyond human perception), 112:1-4 (Is the Absolute, Unique in Being) etc. 2:256 (No compulsion in religion/beliefs/habit), 6:109, 10:99, 29:46 etc.

⁸⁷ Asad translation: 55:29 On Him depends all creatures in the heavens and on earth; [and] every day He manifests Himself in yet another [wondrous] way." A good example of good theology and cosmology is the works by scientists as P.Davies, Ervin Laszlo and process theologians as Cobb, Griffith, Kung, Heschel, Whitehead, Shahrur, Parwez, Iqbal, Mashriqi, Wadud etc.

universal ethics and the obligation (*al-Din*) of peacemaking (*al-Islam*), which unites mankind in their humanity and positive behaviour.

10:25

والله يدعوا الى دار السلم ويهدى من يشاء الى صراط مستقيم

God calls to the Abode/State of Peace (*Dar al-Salam*), and leads whomever to the straight path (*sirat mustaqeem*).

16:89-90

ويوم نبعث في كل امة شهيدا عليهم من انفسهم وجننا بك شهيدا على هولاء ونزلنا عليك الكتاب تبينا لكل شىء وهدى ورحمة وبشرى للمسلمين

ان الله يامر بالعدل والاحسن وايتائ ذى القربى وينهى عن الفحشاء والمنكر والبغى يعظكم لعلكم تذكرون

For, a period, We shall raise from every community a leading witness (*shaheedan*) against them from among themselves. And We shall call you (O Prophet!) to testify regarding those whom your message has reached. The Book [revelation] We have revealed to you explains everything (*tibyanaan likulli shayin*); a Guide (*wahudan*) and means of development (*rahmatan*) and the glad tidings for all those who have given over to peace and wholeness (*al-Muslimeen*). God commands justice (*al-3dl*), creating goodness in the society (*ihsani*), and giving to relatives. And He forbids all indecent deeds (*al-Fahshai*), and immorality (*al-Munkar*) and oppression (*al-Baghyi*). He instructs you (again) so that you may take it to heart.

Verses 3:110 and 3:114 show that we must work together with all people in forming ethical values of universal rational morality (*maruf*) and immorality (*munkar*):

Al-Mumineen are told to:

3:110

تامرون بالمعروف وتتنهون عن المنكر

You shall enjoin recognized norms (*tamuruna bi-l-Maruf*) and discourage the immoral wrongs (*tanhawna ani al-Munkar*).

And the *Ahli al-Kitab*, people of other religions, are also doing the same:

3:114

ويامرون بالمعروف وينهون عن المنكر ويسرعون فى الخير

And they promote recognized norms (*yamuruna bi-l-Maruf*) and deter from immoral wrongs (*yanhawna ani al-Munkar*). And they hasten in goodness (*al-Khariyat*).

Thus *al-Islam* symbolizes the cooperation between all people on earth, who adhere to the above mentioned principles, in creating an ethical just society (*al-Maruf* and *al-3dl*) and peace and welfare (*al-Salam*).

As prof. Abdulaziz Sachedina beautifully explains:

“In other words, the unity of the path is at the level of universal guidance, that which is imprinted upon human beings by Gob, by virtue of which they are all one nation. At the same time, diversity exists at the level of the specific guidance proclaimed by the prophets.”⁸⁸

⁸⁸ Page 94, *The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism* by Abdulaziz Sachedina (2001).

“In other words, the claim to be the best community ‘ever brought forth to human beings’ could be sustained only if Islamic revelation could provide an inclusive religious doctrine that would institutionalize the divinely ordained diversity of faiths. To create a just society in which peoples of different religions would coexist in peace and harmony was the responsibility of the best community.”⁸⁹

“The importance given to the moral duty to command good and forbid evil in verse K3:110 indicates the way the Koran conceived of ethics as the basis for interreligious cooperation.”⁹⁰

Allama Mashriqi, one of the greatest Islamic scholars, also explained this in a 1954 lecture:

“The law of the Quran in the capacity of Divine Message to Mankind is perfectly universal and applicable to all nations. It knows no racial, geographical or religious bounds as it applies to the whole of Human species. How do Human nations rise to power and through what delinquency in their efforts they fall and are wiped out of the face of the earth—this as a matter of fact is the essence of a part of the whole teaching of the Quran. “Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian rather he was a downright acceptor of commands: (*hanifan Musliman*) (3:67) Shows that the Quran does not accept the theory of Prophets having come down on earth for the purpose of instituting ‘religions’ or sects, nor did they come to divide man. “Human beings are one people” and “for this very purpose, God created them.” (*wa li zalika khalaqahum*) (11:119) Show that the intention of nature is to make Man develop as One Nation, in fact develop in exactly the same way as millions of other species of lower beings have evolved into higher beings.”⁹¹

If *al-Islam* is the title of the universal ethical way of life that is shared by people who do not have to believe in the Qur’an being from God, but do agree on its presented values and goals, and thus are not direct rejecters of its mission (i.e. *al-Kafireen*), then how are the people who do believe in the Qur’an called? Although traditional Islamic thought have acknowledged a difference between the two terms *al-Islam* and *al-Iman*, these were still understood in an exclusive dogmatic religious framework. But as shown, the Qur’an approach the first of these two as inclusive and universal (pluralistic universalism), whereby people can hold on to their own religious background and accept the universal ethics of *al-Islam*, while not accepting other religions; and I will show how the second is also inclusive, but on a higher universal level as it involves accepting the truthful origins of all religions, the universal ethics of *al-Islam*, and the specified ethics of *al-Iman*⁹².

In verse 33:35⁹³ there is a difference made between *al-Muslimun* and *al-Muminun*, in 49:14⁹⁴ we see how *al-Islam* (*aslamna*) precedes *al-Iman* (right after the universalistic verse 49:13), showing *al-Iman* is a higher stage of *al-Islam*, but not a separate field or framework. As explained earlier in fn 59, *الامن* *al-Iman* comes from the root *amina*, meaning *to trust, to*

⁸⁹ Page 136, Ibid.

⁹⁰ Page 137, Ibid.

⁹¹ Page 227, Man’s Destiny by Allama Mashriqi

⁹² See for detailed explanations: Chapter 1, The Qur’an, Morality and Critical Reason; The Essential Muhammad Shahrur by Andreas Christmann and Muhammad Shahrur (2009) and pages 442-443, Quran: a Reformist translation by dr.Edip Yuksel (2008). The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism by Abdulaziz Sachedina (2001).

⁹³ 33:35 Surely, the peacefully men (*al-Muslimeen*), and the peacefully women (*al-Muslimati*), the peacekeeping men (*al-Mumineen*), and the peacekeeping women (*al-Muminati*)..”

⁹⁴ 49:14 The Arab nomads said, "We are convinced trustworthy peacekeepers (*amanna*).” Say, "You have no conviction (*lam tuminoo*); what you should say is, 'We have accepted peace (*aslamna*),' until the conviction (*al-Iman*) is established in your hearts." If you obey God and His messenger, He will not put any of your works to waste. God is Protecting (*Ghafoor*), Providing further development (*Rahim*).”

*create security, to be or feel safe from harm and fear*⁹⁵. Scholar Amin A. Islahi says it means *to accept* as it is the opposite of *Kufr*, to reject and deny⁹⁶. Depending on the context it refers to trust or to be convinced about something (i.e. God, the future etc.), but most verses containing a variant of the root used for the interaction between humans refer to creating peace and safety between the people, which is closer to the original root meaning:

14:35

واذ قال ابراهيم رب اجعل هذا البلداً آمناً واجنبني وبنى ان نعبد الاصنام

Recall that Abraham said, "My Lord! Make this a peaceful/safe land/place (*aminan*) and protect me and my children from worshipping idols in any form."

28:31

ين موسى اقبل ولا تخف انك من الءامن

"O Moses! Draw near, and fear not, you are of the people who are secure from harm (*al-Amineena*)."

34:18

سيروا فيها ليالى واما امنين

"Travel in them by night and day in complete security (*amineena*)."

6:81-82

م بالله ما لم ينزل به عليكم سلطانا فاي وكيف اخاف ما اشركتم ولا تخافون انكم اشركت
الفريقين احق بالامن ان كنتم تعلمون
الذين ءامنوا ولم يلبسوا ايمنهم بظلم اولئك لهم الامن وهم مهتدون

"How can I possibly fear (*akhafu*) what you hold on too (*ashraktum*); yet you do not fear that you have associated other things (*ashraktum*) with God, for which He has not sent down to you any authority. So which of our two groups has more right (*ahaqqu*) of security/peace (*bil-Amni*) if you know?" Those who are entrusted with maintaining peace and have trust [in God] (*allathee amanu*) and and have not obscured their trust (*imanahum*) with enervating behaviour (*ithm*), for them is inner peace and security (*al-Amnu*). They are rightly guided (*muhtadoona*).

Normally is verb form IV of the root *amanu* understood as *to believe*, but as prof. Ambros points out, this religious understanding of the word is a development from outside the Arabic language⁹⁷. Just as *al-Islam*, is *al-Iman* a verbal noun in form IV, and thus refers to the performing of the root represented in a noun. *Al-Iman* can be understood as the giving of security and safety, or The trust of creating security for others. We see a good example in the below verse where form IV of the root clearly means *to protect* or *make secure* as the context doesn't allow any other option:

106:4

الذى اطعمهم من جوع وءامنهم من خوف

The One who fed them from hunger (*ju3an*), and protected them (*amanahum*) from fear (*khauf*).

⁹⁵ Page 29, A Concise Dictionary of Koranic Arabic by Professor Arne Ambros (2004): *To be or feel safe, to be safe and secure, not to fear, to trust, to entrust.*

⁹⁶ Page 109, Volume 1, Tadabbur-e-Qur'an by Amin Ahsan Islahi (2008).

⁹⁷ Page 29, A Concise Dictionary of Koranic Arabic by Professor Arne Ambros (2004): *Whereas most derivatives of the root '-m-n are genuinely Arabic (to be and create safety), the technical religious meaning of 'believing' appears to have developed under the influence of Aramaic and/or Ethiopic.*

In verse 59:23, God describes Himself as المومن *al-Mumin*, which is also form IV of the root *amanu*. As God cannot be called ‘the believer’, several translations correctly render it as ‘the Granter of security’, ‘the Giver of peace’ or ‘the Giver of security’⁹⁸. Prof. Ambros understands it as one *giving security* or *someone rendering something safe*⁹⁹. It is also interesting that the attribute preceding it is السلم *al-Salamu*, the Source of Peace, and the one coming after it is المهيمن *al-Muhayminu*, the Guardian over all.

Parwez explains God is called *al-Mumin* ‘as He is responsible for the safety, security of the entire universe. And therefore, *Mumin* is also a person who ensures peace and security in the world by acting and enforcing the laws given by God. [...] is one who accepts the truth and acts in such a way that it ensures his own peace and helps him to safeguard the peace and security of the rest of mankind.’¹⁰⁰

59:23

هو الله الذى لا اله الا هو الملك القدوس السلم المومن المهيمن العزيز الجبار المتكبر سبحن الله
عما يشركون

He is God; there is no god besides Him. The True Controller (*al-Malik*), the Impeccable (*al-Qadus*), the Source of all peace (*al-Salamu*), the Giver of security (*al-Mumin*), the Watcher over all things (*al-Muhayminu*), the Exalted (*al-Aziz*), the Compeller over his creation (*al-Jabaar*), the Supreme (*al-Mutkabir*). Glorious is God, far above what they ascribe to Him.

Al-Zubaidi mentions in his famous Arabic lexicon that: ‘A *Mumin* is one who stands guarantee for peace, upon whom one can depend, rely and then rest at peace. One who guarantees international peace.’¹⁰¹

In the Qur'an, the term كفر *kafara* became the opposite of امن *amina*. Izutsu in his famous semantic works, discusses how the term *kafara*, to be ungrateful, was the opposite of *shakara*, to be grateful, but in the Qur'an it was given a new meaning by becoming the opposite of *amina*. While he retains the traditional meanings in his semantic discussion, his observation is very significant as it shows the intention the Qur'an tries to explain to mankind¹⁰². *Amina*, as said above, means to be secure and give security to other people. This means life is important as it deserves protection. *Kafara* means *to be ungrateful* and *to cover/conceal or bury something*, and when put opposite of *amina*, it means *to be ungrateful of life* and thus wanting to destroy it. This is why people opposing the Qur'anic values are called الكافرين *al-Kafireen* as they deny its divine origins and its intended mission of creating peace and welfare among all of mankind. They want to bury the welfare of others, which is why الظالمين *al-Zalameen*, those that displace and decrease the rights of others, is a common description of *al-Kafireen*. People who are not convinced of the Qur'an's divine origins, but do agree with its intended

⁹⁸ Tafsir Jalalayn (1500) gives: ‘*The Securer*’, trans. Feras Hamza, Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought. Tafsir Ibn Abbas (850) gives: ‘*His created being are safe from increase of His punishment for that which is decreed upon them due to their own deeds, His created brings are safe from His transgression; it is also said that this means: His friends are safe from His torment; it is also said that this means: He is Trustworthy regarding the deeds of slaves and Trustworthy regarding what He can do to His created beings.*’ trans. Mokrane Guezzou, Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought.

⁹⁹ Page 29, A Concise Dictionary of Koranic Arabic by Professor Arne Ambros (2004).

¹⁰⁰ Page 26-27, Volume 1, , Exposition of the Holy Qur'an by G.A.Parwez (1990).

¹⁰¹ تاج العروس (Taj al-Arus) by Husaini al-Zubaidi (1780). Page 25, Volume 1, , Exposition of the Holy Qur'an by G.A.Parwez (1990).

¹⁰² Page 30-33, God and Man in the Koran by T.Izutsu (1963). The structure of Ethical terms in the Quran by T.Izutsu (1960).

mission of peace, truth and progress do not belong to *al-Kafireen*, only those that are aggressive and seek constant conflict¹⁰³. They are the direct opposite of *al-Muslimeen* and *al-Mumineen*, peace acceptors and peace maintainers. We can see that *al-Mushrikeen* is not directly on the level of *al-Kafireen*, they only become so when using violence, as the Qur'an commands us to protect them when they ask for asylum. Which shows we must help every person who also wants peace and safety:

9:6

وان احد من المشركين استجارك فاجره حتى يسمع كلم الله ثم ابلغه مامنه ذلك بانهم قوم لا يعلمون

If any of those who are stuck in their traditions (*al-Mushrikeen*) seeks your protection (*istajarak*), then you may protect him (*ajir'hu*) so that he may hear the words of God, and then send him to a place where he feels safe and secure (*mamanahu*). This is because they are a people who do not understand [reality] (*ya3lamuna*).

This verse also directly shows that the concept of a 'total' war on the world is absurd, as some people have understood to be the message of verse 9:5¹⁰⁴, but as the majority on earth wants to feel safe and live in peace and are not aggressors, no all-out conflict must ever be sought. Verse 9:1 clearly shows that these particular *al-Mushrikeen* had made a peace treaty with Prophet Muhammad, but violated it, thus becoming *al-Kafireen*. The other *mushrikeen* who hold on to their peace treaty are to be respected:

9:4

الا الذين عهدتم من المشركين ثم لم ينقصوكم شيئا ولم يظاهروا عليكم احدا فاتموا اليهم عهدهم ان الله يحب المتقين

Except those stuck in their beliefs (*al-Mushrikeen*) with whom you made a peace treaty (*3hadtum*), then they have not failed you in anything and have not supported any one against you, so fulfil to them their treaty to their term; surely Allah loves those who are careful of their duty/righteous (*al-Mutiqeen*).

This is what it means to be *mumineen*, protectors and maintainers of peace and security. The *al-Mumineen* are also told to immediately accept a peace offer by *al-Kafireen* when they give it, as the objective is to always strive for peace¹⁰⁵:

8:61

وان جنحوا للسلم فاجنح لها وتوكل على الله انه هو السميع العليم

When they incline to Peace (*al-Salm*), you shall incline to it, and trust in God. He is the Hearer, the Knower.

Chapter 109 is directly addressed to *al-Kafiroon*, where they are told that they serve (*3bidun*) different interests and that they have their own obligations and morality (*din*) and *al-Muslimeen* and *al-Kafireen* must leave each other alone. Chapter 109 can be then understood as a declaration of a peace treaty. Historical records say it could have been revealed in the Meccan or Medinan period, the first is the prosecution period in Mecca, and the second the resistance period in Medina¹⁰⁶.

¹⁰³ See verses 8:15-16, 47:4 etc.

¹⁰⁴ 9:5 So when the restricted months have passed, then you may kill *al-Mushrikeen* wherever you find them, take them, surround them, and stand against them at every point. If they repent, establish *al-Salat*, and contribute towards betterment (*al-Zakat*), then you shall leave them alone. God is Protector, Provider of development."

¹⁰⁵ See also verse 4:90-94.

¹⁰⁶ Page 581-585, Volume 12, Towards Understanding the Qur'an by Maudoodi (2002).

The understanding of *المؤمنين al-Mumineen*, as the people entrusted with maintaining peace, comes forth beautifully in this verse:

49:9-10

وان طائفتان من المؤمنين اقتتلوا فاصلحوا بينهما فان بغت احدهما على الاخرى فقتلوا العدل واقسطوا ان الله يحب التى تبغى حتى تقىء الى امر الله فان فاءت فاصلحوا بينهما بالمقسطين

انما المؤمنون اخوة فاصلحوا بين اخويكم واتقوا الله لعلكم ترحمون

If two parties of those entrusted with maintaining peace (*al-Mumineen*) battle with each other, you shall make peace (*aslihu*)⁶² between them; but if one of them aggresses against the other, then you shall fight the one aggressing until it complies with God's command. Once it complies, then you shall make peace (*aslihu*) between the two groups with justice (*3dl*), and be equitable (*aqsitu*); for God loves those who are equitable. Those who entrusted with maintaining peace (*al-Muminuna*) are but brothers (*ikhwatun*); so make peace (*aslihu*) between your brothers, and be aware of God, that you may receive development (*turhamuna*).

The *Mumineen* have several extra duties and requirements, next to those mentioned already under *al-Islam*.

2:208

يايها الذين ءامنوا ادخلوا فى السلم كافة ولا تتبعوا خطوات الشيطان انه لكم عدو مبين

O you who are convinced and entrusted with maintaining peace (*alatheen amanu*), enter in the Peace (*al-Silm*) completely (*kaffatan*), and do not follow the footsteps of the devil. He is to you a clear enemy.

3:102

يايها الذين ءامنوا اتقوا الله حق تقاته ولا تموتن الا وانتم مسلمون

O you who are convinced and are entrusted with maintaining peace (*alatheen amanu*), be aware of God as He deserves awareness, and do not die except as ones who have given to peace (*muslimun*).

2:177

ليس البر ان تولوا وجوهكم قبل المشرق والمغرب ولكن البر من ءامن بالله واليوم الءاخر والملئكة والكتب والنبيين وءاتى المال على حبه ذوى القربى واليتى والمسكين وابن السبيل والسائلين وفى الرقاب وءاتى الزكوة والموفون بعهدهم اذا عهدوا والصبرين فى الباساء والضراء وحين الباس اولئك الذين صدقوا واولئك هم المتقون

It is not Righteousness (*al-Birr*) to turn your faces towards the east and the west, but Righteousness (*al-Birr*) is:

- **One who is convinced of God (*amana bi-lahi*) and the Future period, and the universal forces (*al-Malaikat*), and the Book [all revelations], and the Prophets.**
- **And he gives money out of love to the near relatives, and the orphans, and the needy and the wayfarer, and those who ask, and to free the necks [slaves, people in debt] (*al-Riqabi*).**
- **And he who establishes the Contact/Forward movement (*al-Salat*), and contributes towards betterment (*al-Zakat*);**
- **And those who keep their pledges when they make a pledge,**
- **And those who persevere in the face of good and bad and during persecution. These are the ones who have been truthful, and they are the righteous (*al-Mutaquna*).**

The above list show that the extra values upheld by *al-Mumineen*, we see first that righteousness must be given to all people, you cannot have a preference for a certain people (east or west). Then the only two (metaphysical) convictions of *al-Islam*, to be convinced and have trust in God and the future in this life and the Hereafter. Then there are new values added; to have trust in the universal forces that control the cosmic framework, الملئكة *al-Mala'ikat*. The word can come from two roots, *malaka*, to control or posses, or *alaka*, to deliver a message¹⁰⁷. And so these forces convey God's Will (*al-Yasha*) and Command (*al-Amr*) in the universe, and control existence, thus they can be best understood as natural laws and directive forces. To be convinced that previous revelations have been sent to people all over earth throughout the ages through Prophets. This value makes *al-Mumin* to be the acceptor of the truthful origins of all religions, and makes it our duty to research them all. *Al-Muslimeen* accept shared ethical values, but do not necessarily accept other people's religious traditions as having an authentic source, thus making them part of an inclusive pluralistic value system (*al-Islam*) while they themselves are not directly inclusive. *al-Mumin* respect all religious traditions, as they believe that God has sent messengers to all nations¹⁰⁸, and that only a few are mentioned in the Qur'an¹⁰⁹, so we cannot simply accept one and reject the other. The Qur'an is appointed as a guardian over all traditions, and so we must research all religious traditions and discuss with its adherents in the best possible way to research and disclose the truth:

5:48

وانزلنا اليك الكتب بالحق مصدقا لما بين يديه من الكتب ومهيمننا عليه فاحكم بينهم بما انزل الله ولا تتبع اهواءهم عما جاءك من الحق لكل جعلنا منكم شرعة ومنهاجا ولو شاء الله لجعلكم امة واحدة ولكن ليبلوكم في ما ءاتاكم فاستبقوا الخيرات الى الله مرجعكم جميعا فينبئكم بما كنتم فيه تختلفون

And We have sent down to you the Scripture with truth (*bi-l-Haqqi*), authenticating (*musaddiqan*) what is present of the Scripture and superseding it (*muhayminan*). So judge between them by what God has sent down, and do not follow their desires from what has come to you of the truth. For each of you We have made laws (*shira'tan*), and a structure (*minhajjan*); and had God willed, He would have made you all one nation (*ummatan wahidatan*), but He tests you with what He has given you; so strive to do good (*istabiqu al-Khayrati*). To God you will return all of you, and He will inform you regarding that in which you dispute.

29:46

ولا تجدلوا اهل الكتب الا بالتي هي احسن الا الذين ظلموا منهم وقولوا ءامنا بالذي انزل الينا وانزل اليكم والهناء والهكم وحد ونحن له مسلمون

Do not argue with the People of the scripture [people of other religions] (*Ahl al-Kitab*) except in a most kind and best manner. But tell those that misplace [the Truth and thus the right of other people] (*al-Zalameen*), "We are convinced in what has been bestowed upon us, as well as [the truth in] what has been bestowed upon you. For, our God and your God is One, and to Him we incline to wholeness (*muslimuna*)."

¹⁰⁷ تاج العروس (Taj al-Arus) by Husaini al-Zubaidi (1780). Page 43, Volume 1, , Exposition of the Holy Qur'an by G.A.Parwez (1990).

¹⁰⁸ 2:213 The people used to be one nation, then God sent the prophets as bearers of good news and as warners, and He sent down with them the book with the facts so that they may judge between the people in what they were disputing. But after receiving the proof, the people disputed in it due to animosity between them. God guided those who acknowledged with His permission regarding what they disputed in of the truth. God guides whoever/whomever (He) wishes to a straight path." See also verses 10:47, 16:36, 16:84 and 35:24.

¹⁰⁹ 4:164 Messengers of whom We have narrated to you from before, and messengers We have not narrated to you; and God spoke to Moses directly."

Verse 2:177 further discloses the responsibility of *al-Mumin* to take care of every person in need, and to free people from slavery, hard labour, extreme debt etc. And then to establish the two requirements of الصلاة *al-Salat* and الزكاة *al-Zakat*. The word *al-Salat* comes from the root *sali*, and means اقبل الي شيء *iqbal ila shay*, to turn or move towards something¹¹⁰, thus representing a goal which is pursued. Raghīb explains *Musalli* as ‘In a horse race when the second horse follows the first one (*sabiq*) so closely that its head always overlaps the first horse’s body that horse is called *Al-Musalli* (i.e. the one who follows closely / remains attached)’.¹¹¹ The word has been used differently throughout the Qur’an where it stands for making contact with God (i.e. prayer, meditation or reflection), for making contact between people, and to move towards achieving the goals of the Qur’an as creating peace and welfare. A good example of this is chapter 107 wherein verse 4 mentions *al-Musulina* stands for people ritual praying and following their own ego, whereby they do not truly understand the purpose of *al-Salat*, as verse 5 says these people have corrupted (*sahuna*) their *Salat*. So what should they have pursued? This is explained in verse 2 and 3, the feeding of the poor and helping the weak¹¹². Thus *Salat* is explained as pursuing the eradication of poverty and helping people who live in hard situations as widows and orphans. In verse 4:101-104 it refers to following the directions of the commander and to subdue the enemy and in 4:43, 5:6, 42:38 and 62:9-10 it can be understood as referring to timed gatherings where the construction and contact dealings of society is discussed. It is essentially clear that as *al-Mumineen* we are moving towards Peace, as this is what the Qur’an guides too.

5:16

يهدى به الله من اتبع رضونه سبل السلم ويخرجهم من الظلمت الى النور باذنه ويهديهم الى صراط مستقيم

God guides with it whoever follows His acceptance, to the ways of peace (*subula al-Salam*); and He brings them out of the darkness and into the light by His leave; and He guides them to a Straight Path (*siratin mustaqimeen*).

Al-Zakat comes from the root *zaka*, which means *it increased/augmented, it throve, grew well, produced fruit, it was/became pure*¹¹³. Thus referring to increase the welfare in society, this is done through giving money to the poor, but also by any act that produces fruitful results for society. Verse 2:177 then orders to hold our oaths and to persevere in all situations, and not lose our goals of peace and justice, whatever the situation.

As *al-Mumineen* we must liberate the oppressed:

4:75

¹¹⁰ Page 308 and 396, Volume 1, *Tadabbur-e-Qur’an* by Amin Ahsan Islahi (2008).

¹¹¹ Page 72-79, Volume 1, *Exposition of the Holy Qur’an* by G.A. Parwez (1990): “*Mosalli is the horse which comes at second place in a race, and is so close to the first-placed that its ears are touching the other's back portion. (The first one is called S'abiq.) It, therefore, means to follow the first one very closely. There is a saying of Ali the fourth caliph, "Sabaqa Rasool-Allah, wa salla Abu-Bakr wa sallasa Omar wa khabatna fitnatun." Rasool-Allah went away first, followed by Abu-Bakr and then Omar and thereafter chaos overtook us (Taj). According to Taj, Salea Wastala means attachment, to remain stuck. From this reference Raghīb says that verse (74/43), "We were not Musalleen," means that they did not follow the Rusul. Accordingly Qurtabi also writes that Sal'at would mean to remain within the bounds of the Laws of Allah, and Tasleah means to walk behind a person so closely that there remains no distance; not to surpass him but remain closely behind.*”

¹¹² Ahmed Ali correctly renders *al-Salat* correctly in this chapter as: ‘It is he who pushes the orphan away, and does not induce others to feed the needy. Woe to those who pray, but are oblivious of their moral duties.’ Page 554, *Al-Qur’an: a contemporary translation* by Ahmed Ali (1988).

¹¹³ Page 406-407, Volume 3, *Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon* (2003).

وما لكم لا تقتلون في سبيل الله والمستضعفين من الرجال والنساء والولدان الذين يقولون ربنا اخرجنا من هذه القرية الظالم
اهلها واجعل لنا من لذك وليا واجعل لنا من لذك نصيرا

Why do you not fight in the cause of God, when the oppressed (*al-Mustadafina*) amongst the men and women and children say, "Our Developer, bring us out of this town whose people are oppressors, and grant us from Yourself a supporter, and grant us from Yourself a victor!"

2:218

ان الذين ءامنوا والذين هاجروا وجهدوا في سبيل الله اولئك يرجون رحمت الله والله غفور رحيم

Those who maintain peace (*alatheen amanu*), and those who have emigrated and strived in the cause of God; these are seeking God's means of development (*rahmat Allah*), and God is Protecting (*ghafour*), Providing of further development (*raheem*).

This is why *al-Islam* is considered a natural disposition, while *al-Iman* will demand things which goes against natural human disposition, as it demands taking risks and a lot of effort. There are many different values and works that fall under *al-Islam* and *al-Iman*, but I have only mentioned the most important goals and values to show the universal and peace creating message of the Qur'an.

The Qur'an thus presents a universal worldview, with the focus on resolving conflicts and contributing to human welfare. The two main issues that obstruct human progress. Our natural disposition is also to be peaceful, we rather avoid conflict. One of the main conclusions of prof.Fry's study, but we are deluding ourselves today to believe we are a war-loving creature. This is a dangerous illusion we must remove from human thought. But war is always possible, so it is important we have conflict managing methods. Next to learning to understand each other¹¹⁴, must we also discuss our issues together and work together. Modern organisations as the European Union and the United Nations are important efforts in the right direction. The Qur'an gives this example of coming together and resolving issues in the form of الحج *al-Hajj*.

The word comes from *hajja*, which means *to aim at something, to intend a certain target, to overcome another through argumentation or testimonies*¹¹⁵. Its main use in the Qur'an is argumentation¹¹⁶. In classic Arabia, these gatherings were used for solving conflicts and enhancing relationships next to traditional rituals. This is also why fighting is forbidden during the months of gathering¹¹⁷. As *al-Hajj* is a duty for all of mankind, as we then take the stand (actions) (*maqamu Ibrihima*) as Abraham which will create safety (*aminan*) for all of us:

3:97

فيه ءايت بينت مقام ابراهيم ومن دخله كان ءامنا والله على الناس حج البيت من استطاع اليه سبيلا ومن كفر فان الله غنى عن
العلمين

Therein are clear messages how Abraham once took his stand (*maqamu Ibrihima*) [against all injustice]. Those who enter it [the Gathering, *al-Hajj*, or the pursuit of Peace, *al-Islam*] will have Peace and Security (*aminan*). So, for God, it is a duty upon all of mankind (*al-Naasi*) to join the Convention at this Meeting Point (*hijjal al-Bayti*) who have a way (*sabilan*) to undertake the visit. One who denies (*kafara*) [the pursuit of

¹¹⁴ Verse 49:13.

¹¹⁵ Page 113-114, Dictionary of the Holy Qur'an by Abdul Mannar Omar (2006). Page 149-151, Volume 2, Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon (2003).

¹¹⁶ see: 2:76, 139, 258; 3:20, 65-66

¹¹⁷ Verses 2:219, 9:5 and 9:36.

peace] certainly, God is independent and free of need (*ghaniyyun*) of the creation (*al-3lamina*).

It is a duty for mankind to gather, and discuss our conflicts and problems so we can find a solution. One of the usages of *hajja* is محجوج *mahjuj* which means a cure or treatment of a wound¹¹⁸. Thus *al-Hajj* is a Qur'anic method of conflict management, it being a gathering of all mankind to probe their issues and discuss how they can solve them¹¹⁹.

As prof. Baljon mentions: "An advantage Ahmad Al-Din wants to ascribe to it (*al-Hajj*), is that such an annual international conference ought to be of avail for prevention of wars."¹²⁰

Parwez expresses the same view: 'The invitation to the House of Allah is extended to all men. By participating in this universal gathering, men become aware of their common interests, aims and ideals. It is not a "religious gathering." People who go there are expected to deliberate on all the problems that confront mankind and seek solution in such a way that the path of progress is opened to man. It is incumbent on all who participate in this gathering of men interest and dedicated to the service of man, to put away all narrow interests and think only of the good of humanity.'¹²¹

The Qur'anic worldview is one where we can all work together on a democratic, universal pluralistic, and ethical world society¹²², whereby we promote and manage peace, take care of the people in need through a welfare system, promote universal values, understand each others traditions and discuss metaphysical and scientific issues in quest for the truth.

As said before, verses 3:110 and 3:114 show that we must work together with all people in forming ethical values of universal rational morality (*maruf*) and immorality (*munkar*). And 42:38-43 and 4:58 demands we as mankind must use a democratic system to handle our affairs on all levels and hand the responsibility of protecting our rights over to people who are worth it (4:58). The potential of the Qur'an as a universal guide towards peace and progress can thus manifest itself more clearly. It unites mankind in purpose and direction, while respecting their differences.

Through this, we can truly become a united mankind again, respecting and honouring our differences, standing up against injustice and working for welfare and peace for all humans.. And thankfully, I can see the beginnings of this horizon appearing on earth. We are called to the Abode of Peace (*Dar al-Salam*), it is time to listen.

10:25

والله يدعوا الى دار السلم ويهدى من يشاء الى صراط مستقيم

God calls to the Abode/State of Peace (*Dar al-Salam*), and leads whomever to the straight path (*sirat mustaqeem*).

3:110

كنتم خير امة اخرجت للناس تامرون بالمعروف وتتهون عن المنكر وتؤمنون بالله ولو ءامن اهل الكتب لكان خيرا لهم منهم المؤمنون واكثرهم الفسقون

¹¹⁸ Page 151, Volume 2, Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon (2003).

¹¹⁹ For universal non-dogmatic understandings of verses concerned with *al-Hajj*, I recommend QXP: The Quran as It Explains Itself by Dr. Shabbir Ahmed (2006).

¹²⁰ Page 80, Modern Muslim Koran Interpretation by Professor J.M.S. Baljon (1968), quoting Khwadja Ahmad Al-Din in his *Bayan li-l Nas*, page 326 (1936).

¹²¹ Page 270, Islam: A Challenge to Religion by G.A. Parwez (1996).

¹²² As also promoted by the Global Ethics foundation of Hans Kung: www.weltethos.org

You are the best of the people (*khayra ummatin*) that has been raised up for the good of mankind (*al-Naasi*). You shall enjoin recognized norms (*tamuruna bi-l-Maruf*) and discourage the immoral wrongs (*tanhawna ani al-Munkar*), since you have conviction in God. Now if the People of the scripture had attained this kind of trust, it would have been for their own good. Among them are people truthful people (*al-Muminuna*), while most of them continue to drift away (*al-Fasiquna*).

3:113-115

ليسوا سواء من اهل الكتب امة قائمة يتلون آيات الله اثناء الليل وهم يسجدون
يومنون بالله واليوم الآخر ويأمرون بالمعروف وينهون عن المنكر ويسرعون في الخيرات واولئك من الصالحين
وما يفعلوا من خير فلن يكفروه والله عليم بالمتقين

They are not all alike. Among the People of the Book [previous religions] are those who take a firm stand for the right cause (*qaimatun*), reflect on the revelations of God all night long and obey it. They acknowledge God and the Future period (*yawmi al-Akhira*), promote recognized norms (*yamuruna bi-l-Maruf*) and deter from immoral wrongs (*yanhawna ani al-Munkar*), and they hasten in goodness (*al-Khariyat*); these are of the promoters of peace and justice (*al-Saliheena*). Any good they do will not go unrewarded. God is fully aware of the righteous.

16:89-90

ويوم نبعث في كل امة شهيدا عليهم من انفسهم وجننا بك شهيدا على هولاء ونزلنا عليك الكتاب تبيانا لكل شيء وهدى
ورحمة وبشرى للمسلمين

ان الله يامر بالعدل والاحسن وايتائ ذى القربى وينهى عن الفحشاء والمنكر والبغى يعظكم لعلكم تذكرون

For, a period, We shall raise from every community a leading witness (*shaheedan*) against them from among themselves. And We shall call you (O Prophet!) to testify regarding those whom your message has reached. The Book [revelation] We have revealed to you explains everything (*tibyanan likulli shayin*); a Guide (*wahudan*) and means of development (*rahmatan*) and the glad tidings for all those who have given over to peace and wholeness (*al-Muslimeen*). God commands justice (*al-3dl*), creating goodness in the society (*ihsani*), and giving to relatives. And He forbids all indecent deeds (*al-Fahshai*), and immorality (*al-Munkar*) and oppression (*al-Baghyi*). He instructs you (again) so that you may take it to heart.

5:15-16

ياهل الكتب قد جاءكم رسولنا يبين لكم كثيرا مما كنتم تخفون من الكتب ويعفوا عن كثير قد جاءكم من الله نور وكتب مبين
يهدى به الله من اتبع رضوانه سبيل السلم ويخرجهم من الظلمت الى النور باذنه ويهديهم الى صراط مستقيم

People of the book [those from previous religions], Our messenger has come to you to proclaim for you much of what you were hiding from the book, and to ignore over much. A light has come to you from God and a clarifying book. God guides with it whoever follows His acceptance, to the ways of peace (*subula al-Salam*); and He brings them out of the darkness and into the light by His leave; and He guides them to a Straight Path (*siratin mustaqimeen*).

18:30

ان الذين امنوا وعملوا الصالحات انا لا نضيع اجر من احسن عملا

Indeed, those who are entrusted with maintaining peace (*amanu*) and who's actions keep and restore the balance [of justice, welfare, progress and environment] (*al-Salihati*), We shall not let go in vain the due reward of the one who's actions improves the state of others (*ahsana*).

2:148

ولكل وجهة هو موليها فاستبقوا الخيرات اين ما تكونوا يات بكم الله جميعا ان الله على كل شىء قدير

And for everyone there is a direction to which he turns. Then strive together toward all that is good for all (*al-Khirat*). Whatever stand you take, God will bring you all together. Indeed, God is the infinite Potential. (2:148)

84:19

لتركبن طبقا عن طبق

You (Mankind) shall surely embark from stage to stage (*tabiqan an tabaqin*).

54:17, 22, 32 and 40

ولقد يسرنا القرآن للذکر فهل من مدکر

And indeed We have made easy (*yassarna*) the Qur'an for understanding and keeping in mind (*al-Dhikr*). So is there anyone who bears this in their mind?

23:61

اولئك يسرعون فى الخیرت وهم لها سبقون

It is those who race with one another to improve the quality of life for humanity (*al-Khirat*), and it is those who are the forerunners [of mankind].

5:48

لكل جعلنا منكم شرعة ومنهاجا ولو شاء الله لجعلكم امة واحدة ولكن لیبلوکم فى ما ءاتکم فاستبقوا الخیرت الى الله مرجعکم جميعا فینبئکم بما کنتم فيه تختلفون

For each [community] among you have We have appointed a way of providence [in conduct.](*Shir'ah*) and way of life (*minhaj*). And if God had so willed, He could surely have made you all one single community: but [He willed it otherwise] in order to test you by means of what He has vouchsafed unto, you. So, outdo one another in doing good to the society. To God you will all return, and He will then make you understand wherein you differed.

42:38-43

والذین استجابوا لربهم واقاموا الصلوة وامرهم شورى بينهم ومما رزقهم ینفقون والذین اذا اصابهم البغى هم ینتصرون وجزوا سیئة سیئة مثلها فمن عفا واصلح فاجره على الله انه لا یحب الظلمین ولمن انتصر بعد ظلمه فاولئک ما علیهم من سبیل انما السبیل على الذین یظلمون الناس ویبغون فى الارض بغير الحق اولئک لهم عذاب الیم ولمن صبر وغفر ان ذلك لمن عزم الامور

They respond to their Maintainer of Evolution (*Rabb*) by establishing the movement towards [Peace] (*al-Salat*), and conduct their affairs by mutual consultation [Democracy] (*al-Shura*), and they keep open for the welfare of others what We have given them. And whenever gross injustice is inflicted upon them, they defend themselves and stand up for their rights (*yantasiruna*). But requiting evil may become an evil in itself! (*sayyi*) So, whoever pardons and makes peace (*aslaha*), his reward rests with God. Surely, He does not love the violators of human rights (*al-Zalimeen*). Certainly, those who stand up for their rights, when injustice befalls them, are not committing any error. The blame is on those who oppress people and cause disorder on the earth resorting to aggression, unprovoked. They are the ones for whom there is a painful retribution. And for he who is patient, perseveres (*sabara*) and forgives and protects (*ghafara*) then that is an indication of strength.

39:18

الذین یستمعون القول فیتبعون احسنه اولئک الذین هدیهم الله واولئک هم اولوا الالباب

Those who listen to the spoken words [i.e. what is said] (*al-Qaul*), and follow the best of its application (*ahsanahu*), such are the ones whom God has guided, and they are the ones endowed with insight (*ulul-l-Babi*).

17:70

ولقد كرّمنا بني آدم

Surely, We have conferred dignity (*karramna*) on the descendants of the human species (*bani adam*) [as a birth right, regardless of where the child is born].

2:256

لا اكراه في الدين قد تبين الرشد من الغي فمن يكفر بالطغوت ويؤمن بالله فقد استمسك بالعروة الوثقى لا انفصام لها والله سميع عليم

There is no compulsion in the belief and thought system (*la ikraha fi al-Din*); the proper way has been made clear from the wrong way. Whoever rejects the transgressors and unjust rulers (*al-Taghut*), and trusts on God, has grasped the firm branch that will never break. God is Hearer, Knower.

4:58

ان الله يامرکم ان تودوا الامنت الى اهلها واذا حکمتم بين الناس ان تحکموا بالعدل ان الله نعمًا يعظکم به ان الله کان سمیعًا بصیرًا

God commands you to entrust your matters of Peace and Security (*al-Amanat*) to those who are capable, competent and sincere. They shall rule and judge equitably (*al-3dl*). Give your trusts to whom they belong. The Enlightenment from God is a blessing for you. He is Hearer, Seer of all that transpires.

3:159

فبما رحمة من الله لنت لهم ولو كنت فظا غليظ القلب لانفضوا من حولك فاعف عنهم واستغفر لهم وشاورهم في الامر فاذا عزمت فتوكل على الله ان الله يحب المتوكلين

It is God's mercy that you (O Messenger!) are lenient and compassionate with people. For, if you were harsh and stern of heart, they would have broken away from you. So, pardon them, arrange for their security, and consult with them (*shawirhum*) in matters of public interest [i.e. use democratic means for ruling]. Then, once you have taken a decision, put your trust in God. Surely, God loves those who do their best and then trust in God.

13:11

له معقبّت من بين يديه ومن خلفه يحفظونه من امر الله ان الله لا يغير ما بقوم حتى يغيروا ما بانفسهم واذا اراد الله بقوم سوءا فلا مرد له وما لهم من دونه من وال

Each person has [forces] in rotation surrounding him. They guard the person and record his actions according to the command of God. Most certainly, God does not change (*yughayyiru*) the condition of a people until they first change themselves. And when God intends a people to suffer calamity [as a consequence of their misdeeds], there is none who can repel it. For, they have no protector besides Him.

13:17

واما ما ينفع الناس فيمكث في الارض

...While what is of benefit (*yanfau*) to mankind, abides on earth.

41:53

سنريهم آياتنا في الاءافاق وفي انفسهم حتى يتبين لهم انه الحق اولم
يكف بربك انه على كل
شىء شهيد

We will show them Our signs/messages (*'ayatinaa*) in the horizons (*al-'afaaqi*), and within themselves/beings/lives (*anfasikum*), until it becomes clear (*yatabayyana*) to them that this is the truth/the right thing (*al-Haqqu*). Is it not enough that your Developer is witness over all things?

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