

# THE QUR'ANIC VISION OF MANKIND'S FUTURE: METAPHYSICAL AND AXIOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR ACHIEVING GOALS SET UP BY THE CREATOR OF MANKIND

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## 1.INTRODUCTION

It is well-known that when nations, governments, religious establishments, corporations, organisations, institutions, groups or individuals plan for their respective futures – especially on a long-term basis, involving major changes or transformations – such planning is normally premised upon certain fundamental assumptions about underlying key variables, such as the political, economic, sociological, cultural, environmental, technological, ideological, geopolitical or international relations factors. In the case of religious establishments, communities, institutions or groups, their key dependent variables would include fundamental assumptions about God and His will for mankind; life beyond death and eschatology; the sacred mission of the religious community; the scriptural prerequisites for attainment of salvation; success in the proselytisation agenda; conversion of non-believers; ultimate happiness or self-transformation. There is one fundamental assumption that is shared by both religious communities or groups and non-religious organisations or institutions, namely their conceptions of human beings and their original nature, and their belief or disbelief in life after death.

When we read some of the literature written in English on the futures planning or envisioning of many non-religious or secular-based organisations, institutions or governments today, we will find in most cases, that their unwritten or unspoken conceptions of human beings are generally reflective of either one of the following contemporary worldviews -- secular humanism, rationalism, pragmatism, empiricism, realism, naturalism, positivism, materialism, existentialism, post-modernism, agnosticism or atheism. In all these different worldviews, there is no recognition of a transcendent dimension in human life, since the fundamental reality of the cosmos is conceived as being materialistic, naturalistic, mechanistic, physicalist, pragmatic or idealistic. Very rarely would one find the conception of

human beings as spiritual beings among the dominant worldviews in the contemporary futures planning of Western countries or societies. If at all spirituality is recognized as a fundamental dimension of human beings, such spirituality, as represented by New Age movement in the West, is usually detached or delinked from any organized religion, and as such, spirituality will be defined in a variety of ways with a variety of subjective meanings or connotations. As for belief in life after death, the contemporary literature of futures planning in Western societies does not address this assumption because mankind's futures do not go beyond the confines of this mundane world. However, Western organisations or institutions which are based on Christian beliefs or theology would take into account the future of mankind beyond earthly existence.

Having said that, there are many things in secular or agnostic cultures and civilisations which we Muslims can, and should, benefit from -- the beneficial and useful knowledge, theories, methods, systems, traditions of solving material, technical or professional aspects of modern societies; or environmental, economic, political, military, scientific and technological advancements, etc., as long as they are not opposed, contrary or repugnant to the worldview, beliefs, principles, norms or values of Islam. Even in the field of Western futures studies, Muslims can learn many things from experts in futures studies from Western institutions; in particular the different methods or methodologies of preparing for the futures of organisations or systems which do not involve spiritual, transcendental or religious values and norms, such as: how to plan for better management or more efficient administration and preferred futures of modern research universities, hugh and complex airports, national soccer teams, national defence systems, adequate food securities, sustainable biodiversity, public health facilities of international standards, and so on, in Muslim organisations, institutions, communities, governments and nations. Muslims can also benefit from the critical futures studies school of thought such as the one led by Ziauddin Sardar and his multi-national colleagues (see Ziauddin Sardar, *et al.* (2019) or from the more holistic methodologies developed by Sohail Inayatullah (see, e.g. Sohail Inayatullah and Lu Na (2018). We can agree with Ziauddin Sardar who developed the new discipline of "Islamic futures" a few decades ago, when he advanced the following five principles as the basis for Islamic futures:

1: Islam must engage with the contemporary world not just as a religion, but as a way of shaping and understanding the world. Islam can provide a matrix and methodology for tackling problems and generating future choices and possibilities for Muslim societies. 2: Muslims must perceive themselves as being a civilisation, rather than members of a set of fragmented nation states. This is the only way to avoid stagnation and marginalisation. 3: Plurality and diversity must become the cornerstones of Islam. 4: Shaping viable and desirable futures for a Muslim civilisation must involve the active participation of communities and conscious effort at consultation (shura) at all levels of society with the aim of achieving a broad consensus (ijma). 5: To shape desirable alternative futures, Muslims must engage constructively with the contemporary world in all its dimensions. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ziauddin\\_Sardar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ziauddin_Sardar). Accessed on 25 May 2021).

We beg to differ with him, however, with regard to his principle no. 3 which makes plurality and diversity as the cornerstones of Islam, and we think we know why he came up with that principle.

Looking into the issue of Muslim futures, we believe that Muslim nations, communities, institutions and organisations will be confronting – within the next decade or more -- very challenging future scenarios which might include “the unthought” disruptions, “wild cards”, “Black Elephants”, “Black Swans” or “Black Jelly-Fishes”, to borrow the well-known metaphors of scholars of futures studies. (see Ziauddin Sardar 2019: 121-172, Sohail Inayatullah 2018). Therefore, in order to plan, prepare and produce the requisite and relevant human talents and new skills, with better psychological, intellectual, emotional, moral, spiritual, natural or technological resources to meet what Ziauddin Sardar calls radically changed “postnormal times” (PNT), Muslim leaders in different sectors of national life will have to chart out new roadmaps with revised strategies to move forward, collectively and systematically, to a better or more preferred future of Islam and the *ummah* before or at the advent of the 3 next Hijriyyah century, the year 1500 *Hijriyyah* (in November 28, 2076, *in shā’ Allāh* (if God wills). Hopefully they would be able to negotiate cautiously but wisely the uncertain, complex, contradicting, chaotic or even “wicked” realities of the future -- domestically as well as regionally or globally. This is an urgent national and ummatic task because we consider the roadmaps and strategic planning blueprints, painstakingly produced in the last two decades, have been

rendered obsolete or irrelevant by the COVID-19 global “tsunami” and its disruptive repercussions in Muslim as well as non-Muslim countries.

What we intend to do in this chapter is to focus on and articulate the vision of the Qur’an regarding human beings’ future and final destiny as the philosophical or worldview foundation for Muslim futures envisioning or planning, so that Muslim organisations, communities, groups and individuals will not be unduly influenced by futures studies which are premised upon secular-oriented worldviews. In the secular-oriented worldviews or philosophies the following concepts of: good and bad, right and wrong, vice and virtue, success and failure, progress and backwardness, development and underdevelopment, sustainability and unsustainability, modernity and backwardness, advancement and regression, happiness and unhappiness, wellbeing and misery, salvation and damnation, strength and weakness, affluence and deprivation, knowledge and ignorance, wisdom and folly, truth and falsehood -- differ significantly from Qur’anic perspectives on those concepts whose meanings are determined, first of all, by Divine revelation (*al-wahy*), Divine knowledge (*al-`ilm*), Divine wisdom (*al-ḥikmah*), Divine truth (*al-ḥaqq*), Divine criterion (*al-furqān*) and Divine authority (*al-sulṭah*). The important place and role of human reason (*aql*) come second after Divine revelation, to complement, corroborate, elucidate or elaborate what Divine wisdom has defined. The role of human reason or the God-given intellect is not to challenge or oppose or replace Divine revelation as is the case of post-Enlightenment secular civilization. In matters where Divine revelation is silent or prefers to leave the matter open, then human reason and rational thinking have to provide the definitions, meanings, answers or solutions as long as they do not contradict the principles, norms and values of Allah’s religion and His revelation.

Thus, when Muslims are being taught by the Qur’an and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (*ṣalla’Llāhu `alaihi wa sallam*, “May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him” henceforth abbreviated as S.A.W.) to ask Allah (*subḥānahū wa ta`ālā*, “Glorified and Exalted be He”, henceforth abbreviated as SWT) with the most frequently recited supplication in Muslim life: “*Rabbanā ātinā fi’d-dunyā ḥasanah wa fi’l-ākhirati ḥasanah wa qinā `adhāba’n-nār*” (S. 2: 201) (O our Sustainer! Grant us good in this world and good in the Hereafter, and keep us safe from the torment (or chastisement) of the Fire), they have to know not only what “goodness in the world”

and “goodness in the Hereafter” mean, but why it is crucial to avoid or be shielded from the “torment or chastisement of the Fire”. They will get the correct answers not from contemporary secular, materialistic or atheistic scholarship, philosophies or ideologies, but from the worldview of the Qur’an. The torment or chastisement of the Fire will take place in the Hereafter which is the ultimate destiny of all human beings, whether they believe or not in the Hereafter. If the non-Muslim’s or Muslim’s search for the good in this world is based on secular, agnostic or atheistic worldviews or philosophies, then they are going to be misguided or go astray as the contemporary secular civilization is in today and they may end up in the Hereafter to be the dwellers of Hell (*al-Jahannam*). But if their search for goodness and their planning for the future are based on the *Dunyā-Ākhirah* continuum as posited by the worldview of the Qur’an in which Paradise (*al-Jannah*) is reserved for those who had pursued “true goodness” in the world as Divine revelation has defined it in light of, and in harmony with, the “ultimate goodness” in life after death and resurrection, then their ultimate destiny will not be in the fire of Hell but in the blissful embrace of eternal happiness in Allah’s Garden. It should be noted that the Qur’an uses the following terms for futures -- *al-ghadd*, meaning tomorrow, in the future and the Hereafter; *al-akhirah*, meaning the afterlife, the next world, the Hereafter and the ultimate future; and *al-ghayb* meaning the unseen realities, dimensions or the unseen future which will be made known in due course. The verse which uses the word *ghadd* (tomorrow) is the following (in translation):

***O you who believe! Fear (the wrath of) Allah, and let every soul reflect what it has forwarded for tomorrow, and fear (the wrath of) Allah. Indeed, Allah is all aware of what you do (S. 59:18).***

The Qur’an also reminds human beings to be God-fearing because...

***...the earth, indeed, belongs to Allah. He gives it as a heriage to whom he wills of His slaves. And the (blessed) end is for those who are God-fearing (S.7:128)***

However, for Muslims or non-Muslims to make this present life or the after death as the arena for their meaningful existence and choice of their future or destiny, they need, first of all, to have the correct conception of a human being: how did it originate, what is its true nature, what are its functions and purposes in this world and where is its final destiny?; secondly, they need to have the correct conception of the world and the universe: how did they originate, what are their true

realities, what is the purpose behind nature and the world, and is there going to be an end to the world and the whole cosmos?

## 2. A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE WORLDVIEW OF THE QUR'AN REGARDING HUMAN BEINGS.

Unlike the secular worldviews, ideologies or philosophical assumptions mentioned above, the Islamic worldview which is derived from the Qur'an offers its own conceptions of human beings and mankind's future which are entirely different from the secular worldviews and conceptions. The Qur'anic revelations makes several assertions about human beings in order to counter and correct the misconceptions which prevailed among the Makkan polytheists, the Jewish and Christian communities and the ancient communities preceding the Jewish and Christian communities. The Qur'anic creed regarding mankind also rejects the European post-Enlightenment theories or philosophies of man as they are generally based on materialism, positivism, naturalism, secularism, agnosticism, atheism, modernism and post-modernism. With regard to the issue of mankind's origin, the Darwinian conception of man is based upon the theory of natural evolution, by which the human species emerged by the accident of nature – not by the intelligent design of a supernatural Creator -- from lower animals in a long series of genetic adaptations. The *homo sapiens* survived the struggle of the fittest and reached the highest position among all the living creatures by virtue of his superior physical and mental faculties.

The Qur'an rejects such theories and presents to mankind the following fundamental tenets about human beings and their ultimate destiny:

1) That the One True God, Allah SWT is the only Creator, Ruler and Sustainer of human beings who created the first human being (Adam, on whom be peace) from earthly matter – clay from black mud – and then Allah SWT blew into the body a sublime Spirit from His creation which gave life and soul to Allah's best of all creations, Human Being (*al-Insān*).

2) Human beings (*al-Insān*) were deliberately created by Allah SWT to be the Slaves (*'ibād*) of Allah SWT for the purpose of knowing, serving and worshipping (*'ibādah*) Allah SWT and to carry out the responsibility of stewardship of Allah's earth

as His Vicegerent (*Khalīfah* of Allah) after being equipped with superior cognitive, affective and psychomotor faculties, the most important and most crucial being his soul (*Nafs*) and his spiritual heart (*Qalb*) which is at the core of his personality.

3) All human beings, Muslims as well as non-Muslims are, inherently, Slaves (or Servants) and Vicegerents of Allah SWT whether they like it or not. However, the qualities of true Servanthood (*ʿIbādiyyah* as distinct from inherent slavehood or *ʿAbdiyyah*) as well as the qualities of true Vicegerency (*Khilāfah*) can be acquired only by human beings' submission (*islām*) to Allah SWT and the performance of the five fundamental religious obligations, belief (*īmān*) in Him and in the other five articles of faith, the practice of moral-humanistic excellence and beauty (*iḥsān*) and the internalization of deep and constant consciousness of Allah SWT with the desire to gain His good pleasure and to avoid His displeasure or wrath (*taqwā*).

4) Allah SWT has repeatedly emphasized throughout the Qur'an the necessity of becoming true believers (*al-Mu'minūn*) in Him and His religion (*al-Islām*), who possess the attributes of *iḥsān* and *taqwā*. These believers are to work together as a single community (*ummah*) who strive to the best of their abilities (*jihād*) in the path of Allah SWT. Without these essential prerequisites of true submission, true servanthood and true vicegerency, the goals and objectives of Islam as Allah's Way or Straight Path (*al-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm*), namely to gain true success, holistic wellbeing, prosperity and happiness (*al-Falāḥ*) cannot be attained by human beings, however intelligent, wise or well-intentioned they may be. If human beings choose the way of disbelievers (*Kuffār*), deniers (*Mukadhdhibbūn*) of Divine scriptures or followers of their lust (*hawā*) and desires (*shahawāt*), they will attain true loss (*al-Khusrān*), true misery in this world and in the Hereafter.

5) The life of human beings as true servants, true vicegerents and true believers of Allah SWT is intended and ordained by Allah SWT to be a life of incessant struggle (*jihād, mujāhadah*) to remain on the Straight Path of Islam which leads them back to Allah SWT safely in this worldly life and blissfully in the Hereafter which is the ultimate destiny of all human beings. The believers' struggle represents the struggle between Truth (*al-Ḥaqq*) and the external forces of Falsehood (*al-Bāṭil*), Disbelief (*Kufr*), Polytheism (*Shirk*), Hypocrisy (*Nifāq*) and the Party of Satan (*Ḥizbu'S-Shaiṭan*), but the greatest struggle (*al-jihād al-akbar*) is the struggle against

the unseen inner enemy, the lower self (*al-nafs al-ammārah*) and the dictates of base desire (*hawā*). The Qur'an reveals and reminds the believers that they will also be tested in their lifetime by Allah SWT through various forms of trials (*ibtilā'*, *balā'*) turmoil and affliction (*fitnah*). However, their true faith, deep consciousness of the pleasure and displeasure of Allah SWT, constant remembrance of Allah SWT (*dhikr Allāh*), patience and perseverance (*ṣabr*) and constancy (*istiqāmah*) will bring Allah's help and mercy to them; they will eventually be triumphant, because Allah SWT loves the true believers and the people of *taqwā*, and He promises that He would assist the true believers and the people of *taqwā* to overcome the many challenges in the life of this world.

6. The whole story of mankind as well as the meaning of human life, from the perspective of the Qur'an, can be briefly summed up in the verse which states (in translation): "***Indeed we belong to Allah and indeed to Him we will return***" (S. 2: 156). Allah SWT reminds human beings several times in the Qur'an that ultimately all affairs will be referred to Allah SWT for His Final Judgement:

***(S.57:5) To Him belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and to Him are all matters referred (for judgement).***

Non-Muslims may not be aware that one of the most important articles of faith (consisting of six articles or Pillars of Faith) in Islam is Belief in the Hereafter (*al-Ākhirah*) which includes the transition or intermediate period called *Ālam al-Barzākh* from the moment of death until the Day of Resurrection, the Day of Judgment, and Paradise and Hell. As such, all Muslims need to keep death and Final Judgement from Allah SWT in mind all the time as they plan for their future wellbeing, short-term or long-term, because whatever they do in this world will have consequences – positive or negative – in the Hereafter. The Qur'an repeatedly proclaims that human life begins in this world but will not end in this world. In fact, the Qur'an asserts that the Real Life (*lahiya'l-ḥayawān*) is the life in the Hereafter (*al-Dār al-Ākhirah* in S. 29: 64) Death will affect all human beings in this transient worldly abode, but death is just the separation of the human soul from the body as the soul enters the world of *Barzākh* until the Day of Judgement. In other words, *al-Dunyā* and *al-Ākhirah* are a temporal continuum as far as the human soul is concerned but it goes through two different dimensions of life with two different natures of time and space.



On the Day of Resurrection, all the dead human beings will be resurrected when Allah SWT will restore their souls to their new bodies in order for them – soul and body reunited -- to undergo the awesome Judgement by Allah SWT as the Absolutely Just Judge Who will command all human beings to stand before Him in order to be thoroughly scrutinised and to be judged with regard to all that they have done during their worldly life. The believers who had obeyed Allah SWT and His Messenger (S.A.W.) and spent their lives doing good deeds – enjoining that which is good and right (*al-amr bi'l-ma'rūf*) and forbidding that which is bad and wrong (*wa al-nahy `an al-munkar*) – in accordance with the *Sharī'ah* (Divine Way and Law) of Allah SWT while hoping to receive the good pleasure (*riḍwān, marḍāh*) of Allah SWT, shall be rewarded with entry into Allah's Paradise (*al-Jannah*) of indescribable joy and happiness, while the unrepentant sinners and those human beings who had lived the life of moral corruption and evil deeds, or a life of disobedience to Allah SWT, or disbelief of the Divine messages, or rebellion against the teachings of Allah SWT or heedlessness against the commands and reminders of Allah SWT and His Messengers shall be punished in Hell (*al-Jahannam*) with different levels of pain, indignity and suffering that would be commensurate with the degrees of their disbelief, sinfulness, heedlessness, arrogance, evil deeds, rebellion, hypocrisy or disobedience during their earthly existence. Being in Paradise or being in Hell is, therefore, the ultimate destiny and the ultimate future of mankind in the worldview of the Qur'an.

It is therefore the height of folly and ignorance for a Muslim who does not properly think, ponder and plan for his/her inexorable migration to the solitary and mysterious world of the grave and, more importantly, to the awesome and most stressful moment in the Court of Divine Justice to be thoroughly examined on the Scales of Justice which would decide hopefully in his/her favour – eternal life in Paradise and not in Hell, thanks to the right faith in their hearts and all the good deeds they have accumulated, and the compassionate decision of Allah SWT to admit them to His Paradise. The Qur'an says (in translation):

***(S. 21:47) We shall set up Just Scales (or Balance) on the Day of Resurrection so that none will be wronged in the least. (We shall bring forth the acts of everyone), even if it be the weight of a grain of mustard seed. We shall suffice as Reckoners.***

***(7:8) The weighing on that Day will be the true weighing: those whose scales are heavy will prosper. (7:9) and those whose scales are light will be the losers, for they, are the ones who have been unjust to Our signs.***

7. The greatest losers (*al-akhsarūn*) according to the Qur'an, are those human beings who ignorantly or arrogantly deny the revelations of Allah SWT, do not believe in the final meeting (*liqā'*) with Allah SWT in the Hereafter, or who make fun or mockery of Allah's messages and His Messengers. Hence their work in this world becomes misguided, although they think they are doing good, and in the Hereafter they would be punished with suffering in Hell. As for those who have true faith in Allah SWT and do good works (*alladhīna āmanu wa `amilu al-ṣāliḥāt*), they would be rewarded with eternal happiness in Allah's Garden (Paradise). Therefore, those who believe in and hope to meet with Allah SWT in the Hereafter, they are commanded a) to be engaged in good and virtuous work, and b) more importantly, to obey, serve and worship Allah SWT without ever associating partners (*shirk*) with Allah SWT or believing that some creatures – natural or supernatural – have divine powers and deserve to be made objects of worship in addition to believing in Allah SWT. The verses (in translation) are as follows:

***(S. 18:103) Say, (O Muhammad): "Shall We tell you who will be the greatest losers in respect of their works? [emphasis added]***

***(S. 18:104) It will be those whose effort went astray in the life of the world and who believe nevertheless that they are doing good.***

***(18:105) Those are the ones who refused to believe in the revelations of their Lord and that they are bound to meet Him. Hence, all their deeds have come to naught, and We shall assign no weight to them on the Day of Resurrection.***

***(S. 18:106) Hell is their recompense for disbelieving and their taking My revelations and My Messengers as objects of jest.***

***(S. 18:107) As for those who believe and do good works, the Gardens of Paradise shall be there to welcome them;***

***(S. 18:108) there they will abide for ever, with no desire to be removed from there.***

***(S. 18:109) Say: "If the sea were to become ink to record the Words of my Lord, indeed the sea would be all used up before the Words of my Lord are exhausted, and it would be the same even if We were to bring an equal amount of ink."***

***(S. 18:110) Say (O Muhammad): "I am no more than a human being like you; one to whom revelation is made: 'Your Lord is the One and Only God.' Hence, whoever looks forward to meet his Lord, let him do righteous works, and let him associate none with the worship of his Lord. [emphasis added]***

In his well-known translation and commentary of the Qur'an, Sayyid Abul A`la Mawdudi gives the following commentary on verse S. 18: 104:

This verse has two meanings. The one is the same that we have adopted in the translation. The other meaning is this: Those who confined all their endeavors to the worldly life. That is, whatever they did, they did for this world without paying any regard to God and the Hereafter. As they considered the worldly life to be the real life, they made the success and prosperity in this world their sole aim and object. Even if they professed the existence of Allah, they never paid any heed to the two implications of this profession: to lead their lives in a way to please Allah and to come out successful on the Day they shall have to render an account of what they did in this world. This was because they considered themselves to be mere rational animals who were absolutely independent and free from every kind of responsibility and had nothing else to do but to enjoy the good things of the world like animals in a meadow.

On verse S. 18: 105, Mawdudi says:

“So worthless will be their deeds” in the sense that they will be of no avail to them in the life after death, even though they might have considered them as their great achievements but the fact is that they will lose all their value as soon as the world shall come to an end. When they will go before their Lord, and all their deeds shall be placed in the scales, they will have no weight at all whether they had built great palaces, established great universities and libraries, set up great factories and laboratories, constructed highways and railways, in short, all their inventions, industries, sciences and arts

and other things of which they were very proud in this world, will lose their weights in the scales. The only thing which will have weight there will be that which had been done in accordance with the divine instructions and with the intention to please Allah. It is, therefore, obvious that if all of one's endeavors were confined to the worldly things and the achievement of worldly desires whose results one would see in this world, one should not reasonably expect to see their results in the Hereafter, for they would have gone waste with the end of this world. It is equally obvious, that only the deeds of the one, who performed them strictly in accordance with His instructions to win His approval with a view to avail of their results in the Hereafter, will find that his deeds had weight in the scales. On the contrary, such a one will find that all his endeavors in the world had gone waste. (Sayyid Abul A`la Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding the Qur'an (Tafhim al-Qur'an* tr. Zafar Ishaq Ansari, Islamic Foundation, UK, 2007

### 3. THE MEANING AND IMPLICATIONS OF MAN'S VICEGERENCY OF ALLAH SWT ON EARTH AND THE ROLE OF *IBLĪS* AS THE SWORN ENEMY OF HUMAN BEINGS WHO BELIEVE IN ALLAH SWT

Before discussing the meaning and implications of human beings being appointed as Allah's vicegerents on earth, it is useful to look at some preceding verses (in translation) in which Allah SWT commands all mankind to be worshippers of their Creator, Master and Sustainer:

***(S. 2:21) O mankind, worship your Sustainer Who has created you as well as those before you so that you will be God-fearing.***

***(S. 2:22) It is He Who has made the earth a resting-place for you, and the sky a canopy, and sent down water from above wherewith He brought forth fruits for your sustenance. Do not, then, set up rivals to Allah when you know (the Truth).....***

***(S. 2:25) (O Prophet), announce glad tidings to those who believe in this Book and do righteous deeds (in accordance with its teachings), that for them are Gardens beneath which rivers flow....***

***(S. 2:28) How can you be ungrateful to Allah Who bestowed life upon you when you were lifeless, then He will cause you to die and will again bring you back to life so that you will be returned to Him.***

**(S. 2:29) It is He Who created for you all that is on earth and then turned above and fashioned it into seven heavens. He knows all things.**

In the above verses human beings are being reprimanded by Allah SWT for being ungrateful to Him in spite of all the bounties that Allah SWT has bestowed upon mankind. They are then reminded that they would be caused to die and then brought back to life to be returned to Him in the Hereafter for the final judgement. This verse is then followed by the following verses which narrate Allah's dialogue with the angels regarding the creation and knowledge of Adam (peace be upon him), and then the dialogue with Iblis who became the sworn enemy of mankind. The Qur'an declares (in translation):

**(S. 2:30) Behold! when your Lord said to the angels: "I am about to place a vicegerent on earth," they said: "Will You place on it one who will spread mischief and shed blood while we celebrate Your limitless glory and extol Your holiness? He said: "Surely I know what you do not know."**

On the meaning of the word '*Khalifah*' or vicegerent, the commentary given by Abul A`la Mawdudi is pertinent and illuminating. Mawdudi says:

The word *Khalifah* or vicegerent is one who exercises the authority delegated to him by his principal, and does so in the capacity of his deputy and agent. Hence, whatever authority he possesses is not inherently his own, but is derived from, and circumscribed by, the limits set by his principal. A vicegerent is not entitled to do what he pleases, but is obliged to carry out the will of his Master. If the vicegerent were either to begin thinking himself the real owner and to use the authority delegated to him in whatever manner he pleased, or if he were to acknowledge someone other than the real owner as his lord and master and to follow his directions, these would be deemed acts of infidelity and rebellion...

The word 'vicegerent' suggested to them [the angels] that the proposed species of creation would be placed on earth with some authority. It was incomprehensible to them how a species of being which had been invested with discretionary power and authority could conform with the overall order of the universe, which is based on absolute and involuntary subservience to the Will of God. They thought that investing anyone with authority in any part of the

universe would lead to mischief and disorder. It is this aspect which the angels were curious about.....

The angels were told that the reason for the appointment of a vicegerent was best known to God alone and could not be understood by them. Despite the services rendered by the angels, something over and above their work was still required. God decided, therefore, to create a new species of being in the world and to invest it with some authority. (Sayyid Abul A`la Mawdudi, Towards Understanding The Qur'an (Tafhim al-Qur'an tr. Zafar Ishaq Ansari, Islamic Foundation, UK, 2007)

The following verses reveal the reason for *Iblīs'* refusal to bow to Adam (peace be upon him), how he tricked Adam and Eve to eat from the forbidden tree which caused them all to be sent down to earth. Muslims are being reminded again and again by Allah SWT in the Qur'an to beware of the guiles of Satan and his followers in order not to be caught in his traps as believers struggle to remain obedient to Allah SWT and stay on the Straight Path which will take them back to Allah SWT in the Hereafter safely and happily.

***(S. 2:34) And when We ordered the angels: "Prostrate yourselves before Adam," all of them fell prostrate, except Iblis. He refused, and gloried in his arrogance and became one of the defiers.***

In his commentary on this verse, Mawdudi says:

*Iblis* literally means 'thoroughly disappointed; utterly in despair'. In Islamic terminology the word denotes the Jinn who, in defiance of God's command, refused to obey and to yoke himself to the service of Adam and his progeny and asked God to allow him a term when he might mislead and tempt mankind to evil and error. He is also called al-Shaytan (Satan)

In fact Satan (or *Iblis*) is not an abstract, impersonal force. Like human beings he is possessed of a specific personality. Moreover, one should not make the mistake of considering Satan an angel. Elsewhere the Qur'an itself clearly states that he was a Jinn and Jinn, as we know, are an independent species, distinct from the angels. See Qur'an 18: 50.)

...In the Qur'an the word shayatin (satans) denotes these jinn and their offspring. Hence, whenever the context itself does not indicate that the term has been used for human beings who possess satanic attributes, the word ' Satans' should be understood to signify these satanic Jinn. (Sayyid Abul A`la Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding The Qur'an\_(Tafhim al-Qur'an* tr. Zafar Ishaq Ansari, Islamic Foundation, UK, 2007)

***(S. 2:36) But Satan caused both of them [Adam and Eve] to deflect from obeying Our command by tempting them to the tree and brought them out of the state they were in, and We said: “Get down all of you; henceforth, each of you is an enemy of the other, and on earth you shall have your abode and your livelihood for an appointed time.”***

The verse clearly states that Satan is the first enemy of mankind, as the progeny of Adam and Eve. However, many human beings can be deceived by numerous seductive ways of Satan because they cannot see Satan or his soldiers while Satan and his associates have the ability to make sinful acts appear alluring, attractive or beneficial to mankind:

***(S. 2:37) Thereupon Adam learned from his Lord words of inspiration and repented and his Lord accepted his repentance for He is Much-Relenting, Most Compassionate.***

***(S. 2:38) We said: “Get you down from here, all of you, and guidance shall come to you from Me: then, whoever will follow My guidance need have no fear, nor shall they grieve.***

The Qur'an informs us in the above verses that Adam (peace be upon him) repented and that his repentance was accepted by Allah SWT. As there was no more stain of sin, Adam and Eve were not responsible for the sins of his progeny, because in Islam no one carries the sins of others. The Qur'an teaches that all human beings are born pure and with the original purity and theocentric tendency of the original nature known as *Fitrah*. Thus, the idea of original sin does not exist in Islamic worldview. On the contrary, human beings are being given great honour by being placed on earth to serve as Allah's trustworthy and obedient vicegerent there.

Human beings are given the indication in the above verse that Allah SWT would provide them with His Divine guidance as to how to live as obedient servants

of Allah SWT and carry out the responsibility of competent vicegerency on His earth. Allah SWT in His wisdom did not leave mankind to wander in the dark. He assured them throughout the Qur'an that His plan and adequate guidance were to be found in all His revealed Books. Human beings were commanded by Him to follow His Divine guidance in His Sacred Scriptures, and organise their culture and civilisation on earth, even for a brief period, on the basis of what He had provided in His Books and the teachings of His human Messengers. He wanted them to follow His guidance and the sublime examples of piety of the Messengers so that they would be able to travel on His Straight Path and not to be swayed by Satan or be deceived by their own lusts and desires. If they were to do that – and the majority of mankind have been guilty of that misguided sense of human freedom – they would be deviated from the path of true submission, true servanthood, true vicegerency and true belief. Instead of *al-Falāḥ* or true gain and wellbeing, they will earn *al-Khusrān* or true loss and misery in this world and in the Hereafter, as indicated in the following verse:

***(2:39) But those who refuse to accept this (guidance) and reject Our Signs as false are destined for the Fire where they shall abide for ever.”***

This permanent commandment of Allah SWT to human beings is valid from the beginning of life until the Day of Judgement. Allah SWT in His omniscience and wisdom knows that it is beyond the rational capability of human beings to prescribe the right way of life for themselves without the guidance and living example of the Prophets and the Messengers. As the servants and vicegerents of Allah SWT on earth, humans are required to follow the way of life and the method (*manhaj*) laid down by their Compassionate, Merciful, Knowledgeable and Wise Creator and Sustainer. Nothing else can lead human beings to the Path and Method that earn Allah's approval and good pleasure. If human beings were to resort to any other means – by using independent reason alone -- in quest of final salvation and lasting happiness in the Hereafter, they are obviously fundamentally mistaken even if they believe they are doing the right thing. Such deliberate deviation from Divine norm in the worldview of the Qur'an is tantamount to arrogance, heedlessness, or callous disregard of God.

The story of the creation of Adam and the origin of the human species occurs seven



times in the Qur'an. (See S. 7: 11 ff., S. 15: 26 ff., S. 17: 61 ff., S. 18: 50, S. 20: 116 ff., S. 38: 71 ff.).

#### 4. HUMAN BEINGS AS SPIRITUAL-MORAL BEINGS WITH *RŪḤ*, *NAFS*, *FIṬRAH*, *QALB*

It is important that Muslims as well as non-Muslims understand that in the worldview of Islam, human beings are essentially, i.e. at core, spiritual-moral beings who have been given that special privilege of limited free will in carrying out their Allah-given responsibilities, even with His Books as infallible guides and the examples of the Prophets and Messengers as role models to be emulated. This special privilege and status given to mankind is due to the fact that human beings are the only creatures of Allah SWT who are inherently and primordially endowed with a Divinely-created *Rūḥ* (Spirit), *Nafs* (Soul) *Fiṭrah* (Original God-oriented Nature) and *Qalb* (Spiritual Heart). This fact is borne out by the following verse (in translation) of the Qur'an:

***(S. 7:172) And recall (O Prophet) when your Lord brought forth descendants from the loins of the Children of Adam, and made them testify concerning themselves, (saying): 'Am I not your Lord?' They said: 'Yes, we do testify.' We did so lest you claim on the Day of Resurrection: 'We were unaware of this.'***

In the above passages Allah SWT reveals to mankind that a covenant between Allah SWT and human beings occurred during the time of Adam (peace be on him). Covenant with Allah SWT was not the exclusive privilege of Israel. In fact, all human beings in their primordial spiritual state are bound in a covenant with Allah SWT in a special way. They are being reminded in the verse that a day will come when they will be made to answer how well they were able to observe that primordial covenant. Muhammad Asad explains the above verse as follows:

According to the Qur'an, the ability to perceive the existence of the Supreme Power is inborn in human nature (*fiṭrah*): and it is this instinctive cognition – which may or may not be subsequently blurred by self-indulgence or adverse environmental influences – that makes every sane human being “bear witness about himself” before God. As so often in the Qur'an, God's “speaking” and man's

“answering” is a metonym for the creative act of God and man’s existential response to it. (Muhammad Asad, *The Message of the Qur’an*, 1980: 276).

We need to refer to a more detailed commentary by Mawdudi on this enigmatic verse regarding the primordial covenant of human beings. He explains:

This event, according to several traditions, took place at the time of the creation of Adam. Apart from the prostration of the angels before Adam and the proclamation that man would be God's vicegerent on earth, all the future progeny of Adam were gathered, and were endowed with both existence and consciousness in order to bear witness to God's lordship. The best interpretation of this event is found in a statement by, 'Ubayy b. Ka'b, who has probably given the substance of what he had heard from the Prophet (peace be on him): God gathered all human beings, divided them into different groups, granted them human form and the faculty of speech, made them enter into a covenant, and then making them witnesses about themselves He asked them: 'Am I not your Lord?' They replied: 'Assuredly you are Our Lord.' Then God told them: 'I call upon the sky and the earth and your own progenitor, Adam, to be witness against you lest you should say on the Day of Judgement that you were ignorant of this. Know well that no one other than Me deserves to be worshipped and no one other than Me is your Lord. So do not ascribe any partner to Me. I shall send to you My Messengers who will remind you of this covenant which you made with Me. I shall send down to you My Books.' In reply all said: 'We witness that You are Our Lord and our Deity. We have no lord or deity other than You.' (Ahmad b. Hanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 5, p. 135 - Ed.)

This event has also been interpreted by some commentators in a purely allegorical sense. They are of the opinion that the purpose of the Qur'an is merely to emphasize that the acceptance of God's lordship is innate in human nature. However, this was narrated in such a way as to suggest that the event did actually take place. We do not subscribe to this allegorical interpretation of the primordial covenant of man with God. For both the Qur'an and Hadith recount it not only as an actual happening, but also affirm that the covenant would be adduced as an argument against man on the Day of Judgement. There remains, therefore, no ground whatsoever to interpret the event in terms of mere allegory.

In our own view the event did take place. God caused all human beings whom He intended to create until the Last Day to come into existence. He endowed upon them life, consciousness and the faculty of speech, and brought home to them that there is no god or lord besides Him, and that Islam alone is the right way to serve Him.

If someone considers calling all human beings together in one assembly impossible, that shows, more than anything else the woeful paucity of his imagination. For if someone accepts that God has the power to create countless human beings in succession, there is no reason to suppose that He did not have the power to create them all at some given moment prior to the creation of the universe, or that He will be unable to resurrect them all at some given moment in the future. Again, it stands to reason that at a time when God wanted to designate man as His vicegerent on earth after endowing him with reason and understanding, He took from him an oath of allegiance. All this is so reasonable that the actual occurrence of the covenant should not cause any wonder. On the contrary, one should wonder if the event did not take place. (Sayyid Abul A`la Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding The Qur'an (Tafhim al-Qur'an*\_tr. Zafar Ishaq Ansari, Islamic Foundation, UK, 2007)

With the understanding of the primordial covenant between human beings in their spiritual state, the existence of the sublime spirit, the transcendent soul and the spiritual heart as the centre of human personality, we can get a deeper insight into why Allah SWT put so much emphasis on the necessity for human beings to keep their hearts and souls in a purified and sound condition (such as “*qalb salīm*” (sound heart) and “*al-naḥs al-muṭma`innah*” (the soul at rest and in a state of tranquility). Allah SWT says (in translation) in very important verses:

***(S.91:7) And by the Soul and by Him Who perfectly proportioned it,***

***(S. 91:8) And imbued it with (the consciousness of) its evil and its piety:***

***(S. 91:9) He who purifies it will prosper,***

***(S. 91:10) And he who suppresses it will be ruined.***

As these verses deal with our soul and clearly offers the Divine formula of our spiritual success and failure, it is crucial that the verses be fully understood. We find

the commentaries given by Abul A`la Mawdudi very detail but very useful and enlightening. The commentary is long, so we shall quote the most relevant parts of the commentary given by Mawdudi. On verse S. 91: 7, he says:

“Proportioned it”: [God] Gave man such a body which by virtue of its erect stature, its hands and feet, and its brain was most appropriate for him to live as man in the world. He blessed him with the senses of sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell which on account of their combination and their characteristics could become the best means of obtaining knowledge for him.... In addition, proportioning also means that man was not created a sinner by birth and a criminal by instinct but on right and sound nature, and was not characterized with any inborn crookedness because of which he may be unable to adopt the right path even if he wanted to do so.

On verse S. 91: 8, Mawdudi explains:

According to this very basic meaning, the word *ilham* is used terminologically for Allah’s inspiring a man with a concept or idea unconsciously. Inspiring the human self with its wickedness and its piety and virtue has two meanings: (1) That the Creator has placed in it tendencies to both good and evil, and this is the thing that every man feels in himself. (2) That Allah has endowed every man’s unconscious mind with the concept that there is a moral good and there is a moral evil, that good morals and acts and evil morals and acts are not equal and alike. *Fujur* (immorality) is an evil thing and *taqwa* (abstention from evils) a good thing. These concepts are not new to man; he is conscious of these by nature, and the Creator has endowed him with the ability to distinguish between good and evil naturally.....

Besides these two, another position of man is that he is a moral being. In this position too Allah has blessed him by inspiration with discrimination between good and evil and of the realization of the good to be good and of the evil to be evil. This sense of discrimination and realization is a universal truth on account of which no human society in the world has ever been without the concepts of good and evil;

On verse S. 91: 10, Mawdudi elucidates:

...[T]he real judgment [of what is really good and what is really bad] does not lie with man; it lies with the Creator, Who has inspired man with his *fujur* and *taqwa*. The *fujur* is that which is *fujur* in the sight of the Creator and the *taqwa* is that which is *taqwa* in His sight. And both have separate results in the sight of the Creator. The result of the one is that he who purifies his self, should attain to eternal success, and the result of the other is that he who suppresses his self, should be a failure. [emphasis added]

The one who purifies his self of *fujur* and develops it to the level of *taqwa* and cultivates in it the good, will attain to eternal success. As against this, the word *dassaha* has been used, the infinitive of which is *tadsiyah*, which means to suppress, conceal, seduce and lead astray. The meaning of this also becomes clear from the context; i.e. the one who suppresses the tendency in his self towards good instead of developing and cultivating it, who seduces it into doing evil, and makes *fujur* dominate over *taqwa* so as to cover it up completely, like the dead body which is buried and covered with earth, will be a failure..... In Surah Al-Aala, Allah says: **Truly successful was he who adopted purity.** (verse 14). In Surah Abasa, Allah has addressed His Messenger (peace be upon him), saying: **And you would not be responsible if he did not adopt purity.** In both these verses, adoption of purity has been regarded as an act of man..... However, the Hadith which Imam Ahmad, Muslim, Nasai and Ibn Abi Shaibah have related on the authority of Zaid bin Arqam, is correct which says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to pray: **O Allah, grant my self its taqwa and purify it; You alone are the best to purify it; You alone are its Guardian and Master.** [This] means that man can only desire and seek *taqwa* and *tazkiyah*; as for its attainment, it depends in any case on Allah's grace and favor alone. And the same is also true of *tadsiyah*: Allah does not suppress a self forcibly, but when a man is resolved on iniquity, Allah deprives him of the grace of *taqwa* and *tazkiyah*, and leaves him alone to suppress and bury his self under any heap of filth he likes. (Sayyid Abul A`la Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding The Qur'an (Tafhim al-Qur'an*, tr. Zafar Ishaq Ansari, Islamic Foundation, UK, 2007)

We need to understand why it is an absolute necessity and urgency of purifying the soul (*nafs*) or cleansing the spiritual heart (*qalb*) from becoming rusted, corrupted or hardened as a result of being infected by psycho-spiritual diseases, or from becoming hard (*qast*). The process of purification and development on a regular

basis, is to prevent the heart from being deceived by worldly delusions, by aiming to reach the level of the “sound heart” (*qalb salīm*, in S. 26: 89, S. 37: 84), the “contrite heart” (*qalb munīb*, in S. 50: 33) or, better yet, the state of “the peaceful, tranquil and satisfied soul” (*al-nafs al-muṭmainnah*, in S. 89: 27-30).

The conception of the *qalb* in the Qur’an is unique and the central place of the *qalb* in Islam and its indispensability in Islamic spiritual and moral development of believers and Islamic leadership have to be fully appreciated. The expected outcome of this spiritual-moral purification and cleansing (*tazkiyah, taṭhīr*) process is the production of the new breed of leaders with high moral integrity. First and foremost, both the Qur’an and the *Sunnah* assert that the fundamental religious values of *īmān, taqwā, iḥsān, maḥabbah*, seeking the pleasure of Allah SWT (*ibtighā’ marḍāti’Llāh*), all proceed from the *qalb* of the believers. The ability to resist the temptations of worldly pleasures and enjoyments (*matā` al-ḥayāt al-dunyā*) or the pressures of passion, base desires or the whisperings, devilish insinuations of Satan or the selfish inclinations of the ego via the negative and reprehensible emotions of envy, jealousy, ostentation or desire for human appreciation or praise (among what the Muslim spiritual doctors call *amrāḍ al-qalb*, diseases of the spiritual heart) – depends upon the spiritual-moral purity and health of the *qalb* at the centre of the human soul, personality and identity. It is for this reason that the focus of Allah’s attention upon human beings is to the *qalb*, not the brain, or the physical appearances of His servants, as is stated in the *ḥadīth*:

***Indeed, Allah does not look at your appearances and your wealth. But He looks at your hearts and your actions. [emphasis added]*** (Muslim)

The *qalb* is therefore the most critical spiritual organ of human beings. If it is purified and cleansed on a regular basis and becomes healthy and sound, it can attract and receive the light of Divine knowledge, guidance and wisdom, and -- with those spiritual resources -- lead human personalities to *al-Falāḥ*, Paradise and goodly pleasure of Allah SWT. But if it is diseased, corrupted, hardened or afflicted with all kinds of spiritual and moral viruses, then it will lead the human personality to all kinds of immoral, unethical or criminal acts which constitute true loss and true misery (*al-Khusrān*) in this world and in the Hereafter.

For that reason, the task of cleansing, purifying, polishing, protecting and elevating the *qalb* has been made a fundamental religious duty (*farḍ `ain*) by Islamic spiritual doctors and savants upon all Muslims. Muslims should know that the inner struggle to control and dominate the passion (*hawā*) and the lower soul that incites to evil (*al-nafs al-ammārah bi's-sū*) is known as “struggle against the soul” (*jihād al-nafs*) which is regarded by most Islamic scholars as “The Greater *Jihād*” (*al-jihād al-akbar*). They should be made to understand via spiritual transformation programmes and training at the hands of the experienced spiritual doctors that the *qalb* that is obedient, sincere, God-fearing, purified and truly loves Allah S.W.T., the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.), and is ready to sacrifice for humanitarian causes, purely for gaining the favours and goodly pleasure of Allah SWT, is the strongest shield and protector of the believer against all kinds of wrong ideas or self-destructive motivations which are bound to lead to unethical behaviour in political or economic activities, such as lying, cheating, corruption, bribery, nepotism, cronyism, treachery and collusion with business or industry tycoons.

The Qur'an explains that when the *qalb* is enlightened by the light of Divine guidance, knowledge and wisdom, and attains the qualities of spiritual-ethical integrity, *ihsān* and *taqwā*, it becomes highly resistant, resilient and effective to withstand and overcome all the subtle means, impulses and devices used by several agencies --Satanic, capitalistic, materialistic, political or business forces or agents in the country to corrupt the Muslim leaders, politicians, bureaucrats or law-enforcement officers.

The positive and desirable qualities of the believers' hearts have to be nourished, developed and refined through proper and systematic processes of: (a) correct and systematic spiritual education (*tarbiyah rūḥiyyah*) and discipline (*riyāḍah*); (b) character discipline and refinement (*tahdhīb al-akhlāq*), purification of the soul (*tazkiyat al-nafs*), and (c) various aspects of *mujāhadah* (systematic measures taken to control, purify or refine the lower soul) which are meant to control and keep in check the base desires and passions.

One of the most important functions of the *qalb* is described in the Qur'an as the process of understanding, comprehending, reasoning, intellection and intuiting arising from the cognitive faculty of the spiritual heart. This cognitive or thinking

faculty and function of the heart is called in Arabic and religious literature as *`aql* (intellect, reason, intelligence), although the Qur'an does not use the term. This means that Allah SWT wants human beings to understand that it is the *qalb* that produces right thinking, rational understanding or rational comprehension (the Qur'an uses the verbal forms of *na`qilu* ("we understand"), *ya`qilun* ("they understand"), and *yafqahūn* ("they understand"). It is assisted by the five senses which provide knowledge input or data for the *qalb* to use by means of its cognitive faculty (*`aql*). The following verses (in translation) illustrate this fact:

***(S. 22: 46) Have they not travelled in the land, so they have their hearts by which they might understand and their ears might listen? For indeed it is not the eyes that are blinded; it is rather the hearts in the breasts that are rendered blind. [emphasis added]***

***(S. 7: 179) And certainly We have created for Hell many of the jinn and mankind; they have hearts with which they fail to understand; and they have eyes with which they fail to see; and they have ears with which they fail to hear. They are like cattle - indeed, even more astray. Such are utterly heedless. [emphasis added]***

The role of the sound intellect or reasoning which is the cognitive function of *qalb*, nevertheless, is very crucial for the *qalb* to make right and wise decisions which produce right and wise actions or behaviour. A full Islamic understanding of the complex nature of the soul and the proper relationship of the four elements of the soul, namely 1) *rūḥ* 2) *qalb* 3) *`aql* and 4) *nafs* can be read from al-Ghazali's *Book of Knowledge* (tr. Nabih Amin Faris, 1962) and *Marvels of the Heart* (tr. Walter J. Skellie, 2010) which are found in his *magnum opus*, *Revival of the Religious Sciences* (translated from his *Iḥyā' `Ulūm al-Dīn*). Dr. Abdullah Rothman, a contemporary Muslim psychologist who is associated with the Cambridge Muslim College explains:

[.....] The *qalb*, which is the spiritual center of the person, and where the faculty of intellect is located as the *`aql*, has the potential to turn in either of two directions which shapes the relative, transient outcome of this conflict [between the Spirit and the Lower Soul]. It [the *qalb*] can turn toward the lower impulses of the *nafs* and become further misaligned with *fiṭrah* [natural disposition to Godliness] by the influences of the *dunyā* and *shayṭan*, resulting in increased negative characteristics of the *muhlikāt* [destructive elements] and a state of *ghaflah* [negligence or forgetfulness] ...Or it can turn toward the higher, Godly nature of the *rūḥ* with the remembrance of Allah and the *ākhirah*, resulting in increased



positive characteristics of the *munjiyāt* [the elements of salvation] and come more in alignment with the soul's state of *fiṭrah*.

Dr. Abdullah emphasises the importance of cleaning the *qalb* by saying:

The work of self-improvement or personal development is the work of constantly staying engaged in the effort to uncover the blocks on the heart, essentially cleaning the heart, and striving and struggling to stay in remembrance of Allah amidst the distractions and downward pulls of the *dunyā*. One aspect of the structure of our souls that can help us in this struggle is the *`aql*, which can be conceived of as the cognitive function, but which is a more Divinely connected kind of reasoning.

His explanation on the *`aql* as the cognitive, intellection and reasoning function of the *qalb* is very important for Muslims to understand:

In the Islamic model of the soul, the *`aql* is not understood as the central driving aspect of the self but is actually better understood as a function of the *qalb*. In addition to the normal kind of logical reasoning that we attribute to the mind, the *qalb* has the ability to perceive and to see things as they are...It is in using this ability to perceive that the *qalb* possesses that we can effectively turn our hearts away from the veils of the *dunyā* which result in a state of *ghaflah*, and turn it toward Allah and the *ākhirah*, accessing through the point of Divine connection within us, the *rūḥ*. (Abdullah Rothman, Adrian Coyle, "Toward a Framework of Islamic Psychology: an Islamic Model of the Soul" in *Journal of Religion and Health* 57, 1731-1744 (2018).

Informed and nurtured by the knowledge and wisdom of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, the true believers' hearts inspire, motivate, strengthen and spur the believers to greater heights of spiritual-ethical development and progress, against the tide and forces of disbelief, polytheism, corruption, anarchy, depravity, immorality, falsehood, nihilism, atheism, individualism, racism and secularism. A corruption-and-hypocrisy-free Muslim society in the future has to be anchored upon the purified hearts and sound intellects of the new breed of Muslim leaders, otherwise there is not going to be a moral transformation and history will repeat itself. Social sciences of agnostic or atheistic societies in the West and in the East will most likely disagree with this approach to societal futures planning because the religious or theistic worldviews are pushed out of scientific or scholarly discourse by the reigning secular humanistic paradigms. But for Islamic scholars, this is the correct and proper approach; unfortunately, the approach is not followed or adopted in mainstream or governmental socio-political institutions of Muslim countries.

Consequently, they keep having political crisis and chaos, one after the other, as they fail to emancipate their minds and souls from the Western “lizard’s hole”, the allegory used by the Prophet (S.A.W.) to indicate the tendency of Muslims to emulate the ways of the People of the Book (Christians and Jews).

Individuals who possess the right kind of intellects, intelligences or reasoning are described by the Qur’an as *Ulu’l-Albāb* (possessors of sound intellects) in 16 verses of the Qur’an. These are also the intellects or intelligences of the God-fearing scholars (*al-`ulamā’* as in Q. *Fāṭir* 35: 28). Equipped with this kind of intellect and being well-versed with the Qur’anic worldview and paradigms, the knowledgeable Muslim intellectuals, leaders or elites will be better able to engage intelligently and confidently in dialogue with the secularised non-Muslim leaders or elites on issues related to power, development, progress, wellbeing, sustainability, success, prosperity or happiness as their understanding and interpretation of those key concepts differ significantly from the secular humanistic or atheistic paradigms. The following verses instruct the believers not to be influenced by people who are oriented only to this worldly life as their knowledge or sciences cannot provide the guidance or the way to the final destiny in the Hereafter:

***(S. 53: 29) Therefore, avoid those who turn away from all remembrance of Us and desire nothing but the life of this world.***

***(S. 53: 30) That is to them the only thing worth knowing [alternatively: “That is their sum-total of knowledge”, or “This is as far as their knowledge will take them”]. Indeed, your Sustainer is fully aware as to who has strayed from His Path, and He knows best those who follow His guidance. [emphasis added]***

***(S. 53: 31) Indeed, to Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth: and so He will reward those who do evil in accordance with what they did, and will reward those who do good with ultimate good.***

***(S. 53: 32) As for those who avoid the [truly] grave sins and shameful deeds even though they may sometimes stumble, know that your Sustainer is abounding in forgiveness....”***

Abdullah Yusuf Ali’s commentary on verse 30 above is as follows:

Men with a materialist turn of mind, whose desires are bounded by...material things, will not go beyond those things.

Their knowledge will be limited to the narrow circle in which their thoughts move. The spiritual world is beyond their ken. While persons with a spiritual outlook, even though they may fail again and again in attaining their full ideals, are on the right Path. They are willing to receive guidance and Allah's Grace will find them out and help them (Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an: English translation of the meanings and Commentary*, 1999: 1640).

When Muslims know and realise that it is the condition and state of the spiritual heart and soul that holds the key to their wellbeing in this world and more so in the Hereafter, it is their obligation to give primary attention to the purification of the heart so that it becomes free from the fatal "diseases" of Kufr, Shirk, egoism, pride, arrogance, conceit, self-deception, jealousy, envy, rancour, heedlessness, love of the world and obsession with its fleeting pleasures. They have to give special attention to the religious obligation (*fard `ain*) of the programme or agenda of moral-spiritual transformation which the concepts of *tazkiyah al-nafs*, *ihsān* and *taqwā* convey in all their futures' planning which involve human beings or society. They should know that this aspect of futures' planning is marginalised, if not absent, in the secular, agnostic or atheistic societies.

##### 5. *AL-DUNYĀ* (THE MUNDANE AND TRANSIENT WORLD) AND ITS MORAL AND ETHICAL CHALLENGES FOR MANKIND

Human beings have been taught by Allah SWT via His revelations – including the Qur'an -- to all His Messengers and Prophets that their lives do not end in this world with their death; rather they would continue to live after being resurrected on the Day of Resurrection to be brought to account before the Judgement of Allah SWT. They are being told by the Qur'an that it is the life in the Hereafter which is the true and permanent life. Therefore, human beings who believe in Divine revelation should plan in the proper way to face the inevitable life of the Hereafter in accordance with the Plan of Allah SWT. The Qur'an states (in translation):

***(S. 29:64) The present life is nothing but sport and amusement. The true life is in the Abode of the Hereafter; if only they knew.***

Abul A`la Mawdudi gives his explanation as follows:

The reality of it [this worldly life] is no more than the children's engaging in a sport and pastime for a while, and then returning home. The one who has become a king here, has not become a king in reality but is only playing the king. A time comes when his play ends, and he leaves the royal throne as empty-handed as he was when he had entered the world. Similarly, no phase of life here is enduring and lasting. Everyone is playing his part only temporarily for a limited time. Those who are charmed by the short-lived triumphs of this life and are able to collect some means of enjoyment and pleasure and of glory and grandeur by losing their conscience and faith, are only engaged in a pastime. What will these toys profit them when after amusing themselves with these for some years in the world, they will enter through the gate of death empty handed into the next world of eternal life and find their same allurements to have caused them an everlasting affliction?"

On the statement "if only they knew," Mawdudi says:

That is, "If these people had known the reality that the life of this world is only a period of preparation for the test, and the real life for man, which is everlasting, is the life Hereafter, they would not have wasted this preparatory period in sport and merry making, but would instead have utilized each moment of it in works conducive to better results in the eternal life of the Hereafter."(Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding The Qur'an (Tafhim al-Qur'an*, tr. Zafar Ishaq Ansari, Islamic Foundation, UK, 2007)

Human beings and Muslims are being reminded in no uncertain terms by the religion of Islam that their final destiny will be in life after death, when on the Day of Judgement they would know whether they would be in Paradise or in Hell. That being the case, the Qur'an keeps on reminding believers and non-believers alike to make their lives in this world as a preparation for their ultimate future in the Hereafter. They are not supposed, however, to live the lives of hermits or celibates or ascetics who shun worldly life to spend their time in social isolation being engaged in continuous spiritual devotion or in continuous meditation and contemplation away from human beings.

The Qur'anic and Islamic way of spiritual devotion to Allah SWT is not via ascetic retreat from, or abandonment of, social interactions, activities and

responsibilities, but by engaging the social, economic, cultural, intellectual and political realities of worldly life, in order to reform (*iṣlāḥ*) individuals and society or change (*taghyīr*) the society for the better. These good deeds (*a`māl ṣāliḥah*) are carried out with the spirit of submission (*islām, taslīm*) to the commandments of Allah SWT, *taqwā, iḥsān* and *raḥmatan li`ālamīn* (as a mercy to all the worlds). They are also a form of serving (*ibādah*) Allah SWT and striving (*jihād*) in His Path. The true believers' way of life is the best and the right way to live in this transient abode.

***(S. 9: 20) The ones who have believed, emigrated and striven in the cause of Allah with their wealth and their lives are greater in rank in the sight of Allah. And it is those who are the attainers [of success].***

***(S. 9: 21) Their Lord gives them good tidings of mercy from Him and approval and of gardens for them wherein is enduring pleasure.***

***(S. 9: 22) [They will be] abiding therein forever. Indeed, Allah has with Him a great reward.***

Allah SWT makes it clear that although believers have to aim at their ultimate future in the Hereafter, they are not allowed to forget or belittle their responsibilities on earth as the vicegerents on earth and their role as leaders of human beings who “enjoin all that which is good and right and forbid all that which is bad and wrong.” In fact, as believers, they have a great and heavy responsibility in this worldly life. They have to overcome the challenges coming from the enemies of Islam, the hostile Disbelievers, Polytheists and Hypocrites who want to spread corruption and mischief (*fasād*) on earth, without forgetting their ultimate goal in the Hereafter. They are to use all the bounties that Allah SWT has granted them, including wealth, as means of achieving goodness in the world and also goodness in life after death. The Qur’an reminds the believers thus:

***(S. 28:77) Seek by means of the wealth that Allah has granted you the Abode of the Hereafter, but forget not your share in this world and do good as Allah has been good to you and do not strive to create mischief in the land, for Allah loves not those who create mischief.”***

One of the challenges faced by true believers in this regard is how to strike the right balance between the legitimate needs of this worldly life and the ultimate needs of the Hereafter. The Qur'an teaches the believers to adopt the mindset that is able to strike the correct balance of seeking goodness in this world and seeking goodness in the Hereafter from the guidance of Allah SWT:

***(S. 2: 201) There are others who say: "Our Lord, grant us what is good [ḥasanah] in this world and what is good [ḥasanah] in the Hereafter, and protect us from the chastisement of the Fire."***

***(S. 2:202) They shall have a portion from what they earned; Allah is quick in reckoning.***

The Qur'an also promises the believers whose lives are spent in good and virtuous acts that they would be given the "Good Life" (*Ḥayāh Ṭayyibah*) in this world:

***(S. 16:97) Whosoever does good deeds (or acts righteously) - whether a man or a woman – while having faith (in Allah SWT), We will surely grant him/her a good life; and will surely grant such persons their reward according to the best of their deeds.***

Abul A`la Mawdudi explains this verse in the following way:

This verse removes the wrong notions of both the Muslims and the disbelievers who are of the opinion that those who adopt a just honest and pious attitude, are most surely losers in this world, though they might be gainers in the Hereafter. Allah removes this misunderstanding, as if to say: This presumption of yours is wrong. The righteous attitude not only leads to a happy life in the Hereafter, but it also guarantees, by Allah's grace, a pure and happy life even in this world. And this is a fact that those people who are sincerely righteous, honest, pure and fair in their dealings enjoy a much better life in this world. For they enjoy that confidence and real honor and respect because of their spotless character, which is not enjoyed by those who lack these virtues. They obtain such pure and outstanding success as are denied to those who employ dirty and disgusting ways to win success. Above all, they enjoy, even though they might be living in poor houses, that peace of mind and satisfaction of

conscience which is denied to the wicked dwellers of mansions and palaces.

Regarding the statement that Allah SWT ***“will surely grant such persons their reward according to the best of their deeds”***, Mawdudi clarifies:

That is, their rank in the Hereafter shall be determined according to their best deeds. In other words, if a person has done both small and great virtues, he will be awarded that high rank which he would merit according to his greatest virtues. (Sayyid Abul A`la Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding The Qur’an (Tafhim al-Qur’an*, tr. Zafar Ishaq Ansari, Islamic Foundation, UK, 2007).

Bearing in mind that the message of Islam and the existence of the Muslim community with its religious vision and mission in the world have been and will continue to be resisted or opposed by the enemies of Islam and their supporters with force and the use of military power, the believers are being commanded by Allah SWT to be prepared for such threats or confrontations. Allah SWT declares (in translation):

***(S. 8:59) Let not the deniers of the truth be deluded that they will gain any advantage. Surely, they, can never overcome Us!***

***(S. 8:60) Make ready for an encounter against them [the hostile or aggressive enemies] all the forces and well-readied horses you can muster that you may overawe the enemies of Allah and your own enemies and others besides them of whom you are unaware but of whom Allah is aware. Whatever you may spend in the cause of Allah shall be fully repaid to you, and you shall not be wronged.***

***(S. 8:61) If they [the combatting enemies] incline to peace, incline you as well to it, and put your trust in Allah. Surely He is All-Hearing. All-Knowing.***

***(S. 8:62) And should they seek to deceive you, Allah is sufficient for you. He it is Who strengthened you with His succour and the believers.***

Then Allah SWT also reveals the importance of the use of iron as a means of technological or physical construction, military defence or for industrial development purposes:

***(57:25) Indeed We sent Our Messengers with Clear Signs, and sent down with them the Book and the Balance that people may uphold justice. And We sent down iron, wherein there is awesome power and many benefits for people, so that Allah may know who, without even having seen Him, helps Him and His Messengers. Surely Allah is Most Strong, Most Mighty.*** [emphasis added]

Abul A`la Mawdudi explains the significance of the verse as follows:

...The mention of sending down iron which has great strength and other benefits for men immediately after stating the object of the mission of the Prophets by itself indicates that by iron here is meant political and military power. Thus the verse means: Allah did not raise His Prophets in the world just to present a scheme for the establishment of justice, but it was also a part of their mission to endeavor to enforce it practically, to collect necessary power to establish justice in all spheres of life, to punish those who might disrupt it and to break the power of those who might resist it. ( Sayyid Abul A`la Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding The Qur'an (Tafhim al-Qur'an*, tr. Zafar Ishaq Ansari, Islamic Foundation, UK, 2007).

Realising the present situation in the world in which the major powers in the world -- including the defiant and belligerent nuclear-armed state of Israel which has been traditionally supported, armed, defended and protected by the United States of America -- have adopted a hostile attitude towards Muslims and Islam around the world, it is necessary for Muslim individuals, organisations and countries to plan to be militarily strong in addition to being holistically, intellectually and scientifically developed. They need to also plan to overcome the petty differences, sectarianism, selfishness, narrow nationalisms, and inter-state rivalry with the goal of achieving global Muslim cooperation, solidarity and unity. Thereby they are capable of becoming a more effective moral-spiritual force in the world which has the mission of spreading the religion of Islam as a "Mercy to all the worlds" (*Raḥmatan li'l-`Ālamīn*, in S. 21: 7:



***(S. 21:107) We have not sent you forth (O Muhammad) except as a mercy (and blessing) to all the worlds.***

Another major obstacle in the path of Muslims trying to be the vicegerents of Allah SWT on earth and carriers of Divine message of *al-Falāḥ* as opposed to *al-Khusrān*, and as believers who are committed to the religious obligation of “enjoining that which is good and right (*al-ma`rūf*) and forbidding that which is bad and wrong (*al-munkar*)” in their communities and on the world stage, is the existence of deceptions and delusions in worldly life (*al-ḥayāt al-dunyā*).

It is crucial especially for the younger generation of Muslims who aspire to be leaders or managers of society in the future need understand how and in what way the deception (*ghurūr*) of this world, the evil forces of Satan and the temptations of base desire mislead, corrupt and finally destroy leaders and masses alike. The following reminders from the Qur’an about worldly deception that all Muslims – especially leaders and elites -- must know and take heed especially when they are planning for the future of themselves, their organisations, their *ummah* or their countries:

***(S. 57:20) Know that the life of this world is only play, and idle talk, and adornment, and boasting among you, and rivalry in increase of wealth and children, like the example of rain whose (resulting) vegetation pleases the tillers, then it dries, then you see it turn yellow, then it becomes straw. And in the Hereafter is severe punishment, and forgiveness from Allah, and (His) good pleasure. And this-worldly life is nothing but a deceiving enjoyment. [emphasis added]***

***(S 3: 185) Everyone is bound to taste death and you shall receive your full reward on the Day of Resurrection. Then, whoever is spared the Fire and is admitted to Paradise has indeed been successful. The life of this world is merely an illusory enjoyment. [emphasis added]***

***(S. 6: 32) The life of this world is nothing but a sport and a pastime, and the life of the Hereafter is far better for those who seek to ward off their ruin. Will you not, then, understand?***

***(S. 3: 14) Men are naturally tempted by the lure of women, children, treasures of gold and silver, horses of mark, cattle***

**and plantations. These are the enjoyments in the life of this world; but with Allah lies a goodly abode to return to.**  
**[emphasis added]**

**(S.3:15) Say: 'Shall I tell you of things better than these? For the God-fearing there are, with their Lord, gardens beneath which rivers flow; there they will abide for ever, will have spouses of stainless purity as companions, and will enjoy the good pleasure of Allah.' Allah thoroughly observes His servants.[emphasis added]**

Allah SWT has made it crystal clear that human beings are easily tempted by a variety of materialistic pleasures, forgetting that the future pleasures that Allah SWT reserves for the God-fearing (*li'lladhīna'ttaqau*) are purer, lasting and elevating, such as “the good pleasure of Allah”. Muslim leaders who are among those God-fearing servants – leaders who are driven by *Īmān*, *Iḥsān*, *Taqwā* and *Maḥabbah* -- aim for the final goal of the good pleasure of Allah SWT and will not sacrifice lasting happiness in the Hereafter for the glittering and tantalising deceptions of the fleeting pleasures of the world.

But modern and contemporary history has revealed many impressive national leaders and smart politicians who have been struck down, spiritually and morally, from their high pedestals and became objects of public derision, shame and rejection due to the influences of the destructive but delusionary forces described by the Qur'an. Hence, the necessity and urgency for Muslim leaders, scholars, intellectuals and organisations to institutionalise the spiritual education and training programmes or modules which are specially designed to promote good consciousness, awareness, and comprehension of the different challenges coming from external forces of evil including that of Satan, in addition to understanding the challenges from the inner forces of *nafs*, *hawā* and *shahwah*, and the well-established methods of overcoming such challenges. We believe many national development plans of many Muslim countries have been undermined or corrupted by leaders or power holders who succumbed to the temptations, deceptions and seductions of the pleasures of the transient and mundane life of the *Dunyā*, in spite of their professional training in leadership or management or elevated social status.

6. THE PREFERRED FUTURE OF THE *UMMAH WASAṬ* (THE COMMUNITY OF JUSTICE, GOODNESS, MORAL-ETHICAL EXCELLENCE AND JUST BALANCE)

FOR ALL MUSLIMS TO ACTUALISE IN THIS PRESENT WORLD, NOT IN THE HEREAFTER.

The Qur'an makes it necessary for all Muslims to belong to the community (*ummah*) of believers, under the leadership of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.), because Islam does not aim at individual perfection but societal fulfilment and civilizational leadership. The Prophet (S.A.W.) was successful in transforming the warring Arab tribes into a new community of believers whose identity transcended race, language, colour, geography and culture. The early *ummah* under his religious, moral and spiritual leadership paradigm fused and united the Makkans and the Madinan believers in a new city-state of *al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah* to become the genesis of a new holistic and theocentric civilization. This Islamic civilization is to lead mankind to attain *hasanah fi'd-dunyā* and *ḥasanah fi'l-ākhirah* with the ultimate goal of getting *al-Falāḥ* and the *Riḍwan* of Allah SWT in His Paradise. From the worldview of the Qur'an, the Jewish community and the Christian communities as people who once had the original Divine Scriptures (*Ahl al-Kitāb*) had failed in fulfilling the Divine mission of leading mankind according to the will of Allah SWT. The leadership mission was then transferred by Allah SWT to the followers of His Final Messenger (S.A.W.). The new *ummah Muḥammadiyah* (Muḥammadan Community) was declared by Allah SWT to be not only “the best of communities (*Khair Ummah*) brought forth for mankind” but in fact as the *Ummah Wasaṭ* in order to become Witnesses for mankind with regard to carrying out Allah's civilisational mission. This is clearly enunciated in the following verse (in translation):

**(S. 2:142) And it is thus that We appointed you to be an Ummah Wasaṭ (Just, Best, Morally Excellent, and Balanced Community) so that you might be witnesses (Shuhadā') to all mankind and the Messenger might be a witness to you.**

It is reported by Imam Ahmad on the authority of Abū Sa`īd al-Khūḍarī that the Prophet (S.A.W.) interpreted the word “*wasāṭan*” in the verse to mean “just” (*`adlan*). A just community has to be in the middle-most position and not swayed by emotions, biases or prejudice in making judgements, decisions or giving evidence. (Ref. *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī, Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*)

The noun “*al-wasaṭ*” (literally, meaning the middle, the middlemost, the centre) implies the best and most just position. One of the wise sayings of the Arabs is “*Khairu al-umūr al-wasaṭ*” (The best of affairs is the middle position). Therefore, when it is said that the Quraish tribe is “*awsaṭ al-`Arab*” in terms of genealogy and locality, it means that it is the best tribe, just as when it was said that the Prophet (s.a.w.) was “*wasaṭan fī qaumihī*” it means that the Prophet (s.a.w.) was the noblest among his people genealogically. (al-Qaraḍāwī, 1977). It is clear that the word *wasaṭ* in the verse carries the meaning given by the Prophet (S.A.W.), namely the meaning of *`adālah* (justice), as well as the meanings of *al-khairiyyah* (being the best or most excellent), *al-tawassuṭ* (being in the centre between two extremes), *al-tawāzun* (being in the state of balance, equilibrium) and *ī`tidāl* (moderateness).

We need to remember that the quality of being the best or the choicest community is clearly emphasised in verse 110 of *Sūrah Āl `Imrān* when Allah SWT declares:

**(S. 3: 110) You are now the Best Community brought forth for (the guidance and reform of) mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah. Had the People of the Book believed it were better for them. Some of them are believers but most of them are transgressors.**

This verse means that the *Khair Ummah* (“Best Community”) status has been acknowledged by Allah SWT Himself with the caveat that the Muslim community as a whole enjoins all that which is good, right, beneficial, virtuous and praiseworthy. The Divinely-declared status of the Best Community carries with it the sacred mission of *al-amr bi’l-ma`rūf wa al-nahy `an al-munkar* (enjoining that which is good and right, and prohibiting that which is bad and wrong). It is a very honourable but demanding mission because the Muslim society or the community has to be an embodiment of *al-ma`rūf* before it can enjoin others to uphold it. Similarly, it has to be an example of a virtuous and moral society which is against evil, corruption, injustice, crimes, wrongdoings and many other kinds of vices.

It is important to realise that this *Khairiyyah* (being the best) feature of the Muslim community is integrated into the status of *Ummah Wasat* so that the religious responsibility of Enjoining the Good and Prohibiting the Bad becomes part and parcel of the *Wasaṭiyyah* characteristic of the *Ummah*. Therefore, when Muslims

plan to represent the moderation of Islam and the Muslim community in this world of turmoil, violence and moral decadence, they should not forget the importance of “enjoining the good and forbidding the bad” in different spheres of the life of the community, the nation and the world community. Of course, in the case of Muslim communities as minority communities in secular nation-states or non-Muslim majority countries, they will have to find the legal, proper and wise ways of executing the moral and ethical responsibilities of the *ummah*..

### 6.1. The Significance of the Role of *Shahādah* in Muslim Futures Planning

The absolute commitment of this “Just, Best, Morally-Excellent and Balanced Community” is, first and foremost, to uphold and preserve the pristine purity of the religion of *Tauhīd*, and execute the commandments and Plan of Allah (S.W.T.), accompanied by a God-fearing mindset (*taqwā*). In that way the Muslims could thereby become the most suitable **WITNESSES** over mankind (*shuhadā' `ala' n-nās*) with regard to the following goals -- the integrity and purity of Allah’s religion, the practice of justice and fairness, the commandment of all that is good and prohibition of all that is bad, as well as the practice of true balance and proper moderation in this worldly life.

To get a holistic and comprehensive understanding of the concept of *Ummah Wasaṭ*, let us ponder for a while over the Divine purpose of appointing the Islamic *Ummah* as the “Just, Best, Morally-Excellent and Balanced Community”. Allah SWT clearly states that it is to make the *Ummah* stand as Witnesses “before all mankind and the Messenger might be a witness before you”. What this means, according to most Qur’an commentators, is that when the whole of mankind is called to account on the Day of Judgement, Prophet Muḥammad (s.a.w.), will stand witness to the fact that he had communicated to the Muslims and non-Muslims and had put into practice the teachings postulating sound beliefs, righteous conduct and a balanced system of life which he had received from on high. The Muslim *Ummah*, as the followers of the Prophet (s.a.w.) , will be asked to bear the same witness before the rest of mankind and to say that they done their best to convey the message of the Prophet (s.a.w.), or to exemplify the teachings of the Prophet (s.a.w.) in their lives and societies. What it means is that just as the Prophet (s.a.w.) had served as the best example of *wasatiyyah* so is the Muslim community required to do so before whole world. The

Muslim communities of today should therefore plan their futures to be the implementors of Justice, Goodness, Moral Excellence and Just Balance.

The *Shahādah* role of the *Ummah Wasaʿ* also means that if we Muslims fail to establish before Allah SWT that we carried out the duty to convey to mankind the message of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, we will be taken to task by Allah SWT just as Allah SWT had to punish the Bani Isra'il for its treacherous conduct. We Muslims will be held partly responsible for the dominance of *al-Munkar* in the society and the Muslim failures to maintain the status as Witnesses for mankind. Muslims have to be prepared to answer the question on the Day of Judgement, such as “What were you doing doing when the world was convulsed by the *fasād* of injustice, moral decadence, corruption, hypocrisy and ethnic fanaticism?”

In planning for the future, Muslims have to bear in mind that they are part of the *Ummah Wasaʿ*, though it is far from being the ideal. They should plan to acquire and institutionalise, a) the qualities of justice in law and order; good governance and ethical and just political systems; b) equitable socio-economic development; c) harmonious inter-communal relations; d) high educational standards and technological prowess of Muslim youth and adults who are able to utilise resources in cyber space without getting lost or trapped in its relativism, nihilism and hedonism; e) creative yet ethical cultural forms and standards; f) peaceful coexistence and cooperation with other religious communities with good character traits of competent, responsible, sincere and accountable leaders of integrity. It is with those excellent attributes that the *Ummah* could be considered as suitable and competent Witnesses for other communities. This is, of course, a formidable challenge in the Muslim world today given the state of moral decay, the culture of mediocrity and the power elites' dependency upon the technologically advanced nations of the West and unending internal crises plaguing many Muslim countries.

## 7. PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE WITH DAY OF RESURRECTION IN MIND.

The Qur'an compellingly, authoritatively and repeatedly informs human beings about the inevitability of the Day of Resurrection or Day of Judgement, using a variety of names for that momentous time – the eschaton -- when the earth and the whole cosmos will be completely destroyed in the most unimaginable ways. The

Qur'an warns since 1442 years ago that "the Hour drew near..." (*iqtarabati's-sā`ah*) and Allah's promise will be fulfilled. Some of the verses (in translation) are as follows:

**(S. 54:1) *The Hour of Resurrection drew near and the moon split asunder.***

**(S. 21: 97) *And the time for the fulfilment of the true promise of Allah draws near, whereupon the eyes of those who disbelieved will stare in fear, and they will say: "Woe to us, we were indeed heedless of this; nay, we were wrongdoers.***

**(S. 15:85) *We have not created the heavens and the earth and all that is in between them except with Truth. Surely the Hour will come. So, (O Muhammad), do graciously overlook them (despite their misdeeds).***

**(S. 40:59) *The Hour will indeed come; there is no doubt about that. Yet most people do not believe.***

**(S. 21:1) *The time of people's reckoning has drawn near, and yet they turn aside in heedlessness.***

Abul A`la Mawdudi gives the following explanation to the above verse:

This is to warn the people that the time of Resurrection when they will have to appear before their Lord to render their accounts is not far. This was because the coming of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was a sign and a clear evidence of the fact that mankind had entered into the last stage of its history. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has himself explained it by holding out two of his adjoining fingers and said: I have been sent at a time which joins to the time of Resurrection just as these two fingers adjoin. By this he meant to say: No other Prophet is coming between me and the Resurrection. Therefore, mend your ways now, for after me no guide is coming with good news and warning. [But] they do not pay heed to any warning nor reflect on their end nor listen to the admonition of the Messenger. (Sayyid Abul A`la Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding The Qur'an (Tafhim al-Qur'an*, tr. Zafar Ishaq Ansari, Islamic Foundation, UK, 2007).

Many of the *surahs* revealed in the Makkan period narrate in different powerful ways and styles the cataclysmic events that would take place during the total destruction of the world and the physical universe. The book by Sayyid Qutb, *Mashāhid al-Qiyāmah fi'l-Qur'ān* (1966) (Spectacles of the Day of Resurrection in the Qur'an) eloquently describes the different scenes of the momentous Day which

would grip the hearts of the Arab listeners in Makkah and Madinah with fear, consternation and disbelief as they understood very clearly what the Qur'an was portraying before them. The Qur'an reminds them of the inevitability of death for all human beings. The Makkan polytheistic Quraish accepted the reality of death but they could not accept the idea of being raised up from the graves after having suffered death and then followed by the rotting away of the physical body. But Allah SWT informs them that just as He had created human beings *ex nihilo*, so it was not difficult at all for the Creator of all things to recreate the human body and reunite the soul with it on the Day of Resurrection. Besides, the Day of Resurrection and life after that, either in Paradise or in Hell for human beings, are the requirements of absolute justice even according to human reason. Allah SWT, as the God of Absolute Justice, knows that true, objective and absolute justice for the wicked or the virtuous servants of His cannot take place in the life of the world due to the nature of worldly existence with all the limitations and constraints. They will only get what they deserve – good or bad – in the Hereafter when Allah SWT asserts His absolute sovereignty and power over His creatures or slaves. It is His attributes of Justice and Mercy (ninety-nine per cent of which is reserved for the inhabitants of the Hereafter, according to an authentic *ḥadīth*) that He wishes to be fully manifested in Paradise and Hell that bring back the dead to life to experience truly objective justice which will be tempered with His infinite mercy and compassion.

The implications of the reality and inevitability of death and the Day of Judgement for Muslim planning of the future, as individuals or as institutions, organisations, communities, tribes, nations or international organisations are quite obvious to the believers. To the non-believers in the existence of the Hereafter or the existence of Allah SWT, their long-term planning will not go beyond death, and will not regard the transcendent or spiritual factors as key factors in human progress, development or civilisational advancement. For believers, as individuals or tribes, communities or nations, the reality and inevitability of death – whose moment is only known to the Compassionate Creator – with the experience of some kind of fearful initial punishment in the grave (*ʿadhāb al-qabr*), then followed by an intermediate period of waiting in transition (*ʿalam al-barzakh*) before experiencing the tumultuous and chaotic Resurrection Day, would be an important motivating factor for fundamental self-reform (*iṣlāḥ*), self-introspection (*muḥāsabah*), self-purification



(*tazkiyah*) striving for Godly causes (*mujāhadah*) , positive transformation or repentance (*taubah*) as a preparation for the Judgement that will come after experiencing death, *barzākh* and Resurrection.

But an even greater inducement and profound motivation for believers' wanting to a) change over a new leaf, b) strategise with the ultimate end in mind, c) plan with full knowledge and conviction in Transcendence and metaphysical truths, that would lead to a major transformation of the self (including sincere repentance) or the community or the nation, d) in accordance with the values and norms of *a/-Falah*, the Straight Path of Allah SWT and the Islamic way of life ordained by Him SWT, is not only the knowledge revealed by the Qur'an and the fearful consciousness of what would happen to human beings on the cosmic cataclysm that the End entails, but also their own afflictions and tribulations which would happen to them on the most awesome, dreadfully long "Days" of stressful journeying, assembling and waiting for the Judgement, let alone the Judgement itself. Some of the relevant verses relating to the Last Day, the Day of Resurrection and the Day of Judgement are as follows:

***(S. 2:281) And fear a Day when you will be returned to Allah. Then every soul will be compensated for what it earned, and they will not be treated unjustly.***

***(S.80: 33-42) But when there comes the Deafening Blast on the Day a man will flee from his brother and his mother and his father And his wife and his children. For every man, that Day, will be a matter adequate for him.[Some] faces, that Day, will be bright -- laughing, rejoicing at good news. And [other] faces, that Day, will have upon them dust. Blackness will cover them. Those are the Disbelievers, the wicked ones."***

***(S. 69: 13-15) And when the trumpet is blown with a single blast, and the earth and the mountains are removed from their places, and crushed with a single crushing, then on that Day shall the (Great) Event befall" (Quran 69:13-15).***

***(S. 39:68) And the Horn will be blown, and whoever is in the heavens and whoever is on the earth will fall dead except whom Allah wills. Then it will be blown again, and at once they will be standing, looking on"***

***(S. 99:1-8) When the earth is shaken with its [final] earthquake. And the earth discharges its burdens And man says, "What is [wrong] with it?" - That Day, it will report its news Because your***

***Lord has commanded it. That Day, the people will depart separated [into categories] to be shown [the result of] their deeds. So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it, And whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it"***

***(S. 32:25) Indeed, your Lord will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning that over which they used to differ.***

***(S. 3:91) Indeed, those who disbelieve and die while they are disbelievers - never would the [whole] capacity of the earth in gold be accepted from one of them if he would [seek to] ransom himself with it. For those there will be a painful punishment, and they will have no helpers.***

***(S. 3:30) The Day every soul will find what it has done of good present [before it] and what it has done of evil, it will wish that between itself and that [evil] was a great distance. And Allah warns you of Himself, and Allah is Kind to [His] servants.***

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

In the futures planning of the more pious and *Ākhirah*-oriented believers, the more knowledge they get about the details of eschatological events that follow the resurrection from the graves, for them to feel in their hearts the terrifying realities of the eschaton and for them to become more engrossed with their spiritual reform, proximity to Allah SWT and constant remembrance of Allah (*dhikru'LLāh*) and remembrance of death (*dhikru'l-maut*), before death comes to them at any time. Knowing that on the Day of Judgement, Prophet Muḥammad (S.A.W.) would be granted by his Compassionate Master SWT the privilege of intercession (*shafā`ah*) for certain servants of Allah SWT on that terrible Day and also would be able to provide water for extremely thirsty servants of Allah SWT from the Pond of *al-Kauthar*, some Muslims would plan to give more attention to the recitation of the *ṣalawāt* (prayers for Allah SWT to bless the Prophet (S.A.W.) and supplications to Allah SWT to grant them the intercession of the Prophet (S.A.W.) as well as the ability to be at the Pond of *al-Kauthar*. These spiritual devotional activities are over and above the good deeds and Islamic way of life as part of their larger futures plan.

There are many authentic *hadiths* and authoritative books on Islamic eschatology written by well-known Muslim scholars such as al-Ghazali (al-Ghazali (2020), *The Remembrance of Death and the Afterlife. Kitab dhikr al-mawt wa-ma*

ba`dahu. Book XL of THE REVIVAL OF THE RELIGIOUS SCIENCES, tr. T.J. Winter, UK: Islamic Texts Society), Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn Qayyim and Ibn al-Jawzi which provide detail analysis of those eschatological events. One major authentic *ḥadīth* recorded by both al-Bukhari and Muslim is that on the Day of Judgement when there will be no shade except the shade provided by Allah SWT, seven types of personalities would have the privilege of being under the shade of Allah. The *ḥadīth* is as follows (in translation):

Abu Huraira reported: *The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “There are seven [types of Islamic personalities] whom Allah will give shade on a day when there is no shade but His [of His Throne]. They are the just ruler [or just leader]; a youth who grew up in the worship of Allah; one whose heart is attached to the mosques; two who love each other, meet each other, and depart from each other for the sake of Allah; a man who is tempted by a beautiful woman of high status [for illicit sexual intercourse], but he rejects her (offer), saying, ‘I fear Allah’; and one spends in charity and conceals it such that his right hand does not know what his left hand has given; and one who remembered Allah in private and his eyes were flooded with tears.”* Source: Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 660, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 1031 Grade: *Muttafaqun Alayhi* (authenticity agreed upon) according to Al-Bukhari and Muslim (from <https://www.abuaminaelias.com/dailyhadithonline/2012/08/08/seven-shaded-by-allah>)

We would like to quote below one commentary regarding the above *ḥadīth* as follows:

This may not seem like much at first but then reflect upon the following *ḥadīth*: “On the Day of Resurrection, the sun would draw so close to the people that there would be left a distance of only a mile. The people will be submerged in perspiration according to their deeds, some up to their ankles, some up to their knees, some up to the waist and some would have the bridle of perspiration and, while saying this, the Messenger of Allah put his hand towards his mouth.” (Narrated by al-Miqdad bin Aswad and collected in Sahih Muslim) And in another *ḥadīth*, some will be submerged in sweat “seventy armlengths in the earth.” (Narrated by Abu Hurairah and collected in Sahih al-Bukhari) (Fareena Aslam and ‘Itrat Azad from <https://www.gulf-times.com/story/667209/The-seven-under-the-Shade-of-Allah>)

Reverting to the authentic *ḥadīth* on the seven types of highly fortunate and privileged personalities on the Day of Judgement, we would recommend that Muslim futures planning on a larger collective, organisational or national scale should include the important agenda of producing a new breed of leaders who possess at least the seven spiritual-moral values mentioned in the *ḥadīth*: 1) Justice and fairness to Allah SWT, to fellow human beings, to other creations of Allah SWT including the natural environment, and to oneself and one's family; 2) commitment, consistency and constancy in the worship of Allah SWT as part of personality development; 3) attachment, care and spiritual bond with "Houses of Allah" where solace and peace of mind are nurtured and nourished; 4) profound and sincere love (*maḥabbah*) of Allah SWT as the strongest and purest type of relationship between human beings as the true servants of Allah SWT; 5) spiritual-moral integrity to withstand all kinds of temptations – sexual, political, financial, materialistic or ethical; 6) self-denying charity, generosity, benevolence and philanthropy motivated by the sole desire to gain the pleasure of Allah SWT; 7) deep and profound *maḥabbah* of Allah SWT which is often manifested in the shedding of tears of longing, joy or penitence in private moments of a servant's spiritual communion with the Beloved Master and Sustainer.

Knowing that those who will be brought into Paradise shall be believers who are fond of doing good deeds and have deep and constant *taqwā*, or believers with several *al-Falāḥ*-oriented characteristics (as indicated in S. 23: 1-10), the Muslim planning strategies of the larger scale should also be geared towards the production of those types of believers via the educational institutions, in addition to the production and development of the new breed of leaders, rulers and power-holders of the *ummah*. It should be noted that the position given to the just rulers/leaders on the Day of Judgement is the first position, which shows that the most elevated and valorised value after Prophethood or Sainthood is that of just leadership, good governance and sound management of societies. The honest, God-fearing, upright and beneficent merchants or business people would also be given high status on the Day of Judgement. One *ḥadīth* says (in translation):

Abu Sa'id reported: The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said,  
**"The honest and trustworthy merchant will be with the prophets, the truthful, and the martyrs."**

Source: Sunan al-Tirmidhī 1209

Grade: **Sahih li**

**ghayrihi** (authentic due to external evidence) according to Al-Albani (<https://www.abuaminaelias.com/dailyhadithonline/2019/06/02/honest-traders-prophets-truthful>)

## 8. KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE “PORTENTS/SIGNS OF THE HOUR” (*ASHRĀṬ AL-SĀ`AH. `ALAMĀT AL-SĀ`AH*): IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURES PLANNING

While Divine wisdom has decided that faith in the reality of the Day of Resurrection or Day of Judgement is an important article of faith in the unseen Realities (*al-Ghaibiyāt*), the Qur’an asserts that only Allah SWT knows when and how it is going to happen. The Qur’an reveals in several places, in response to the questioning by the disbelieving people to the Prophet (S.A.W.), that the Hour would happen unexpectedly (*baghtatan*) and human beings living at the time would be completely shocked, stunned and terrified. Allah SWT gives the following warning (in translation) to mankind:

***(S. 22:1) O mankind, fear the (wrath of) your Lord! Indeed, the convulsion of the Hour (of Judgement) will be an awfully terrible thing.***

This apocalyptic condition is depicted in the Qur’an at several other places such as in S. 56: 6; S. 69: 13-14; S. 73: 14,17-18; S. 79: 6-9; S. 99: 1-3.

***(S. 22:2) On the Day when you witness it, the suckling woman shall utterly neglect the infant she suckles, and every pregnant woman shall drop her load (unformed), and you shall see mankind as in a drunken riot, yet they are not drunk; but dreadful shall be Allah's chastisement.***

This depiction which portrays the intensity and horror of the great convulsion is to impress upon human beings the dreadful torment of the Hour, thus motivating the disbelieving or doubting listeners to mend their ways and start believing in Allah SWT and His revealed teachings. The following passage refers to those disbelieving people.

***(S. 22:3) Among people there are some who wrangle about Allah without knowledge and follow every rebellious Satan.***

Nevertheless, knowledge of some of the Hour's portents (*ashrāt*) or signs (*alāmāt*) are extremely important and useful for the believers to make the right preparations at individual, *ummatic* or civilisational levels. That could be the reason why when Jibrīl (on whom be peace) asked the Prophet (S.W.T.) to tell him the signs of the Hour, after asking him the meaning of *Islām*, *Īmān* and *Iḥsān*:

***Then he [Jibrīl] further asked, "When will the Hour be established?" Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) replied, "The answerer has no better knowledge than the questioner. But I will inform you about its portents (ashrātihā);***

***1. When a slave (lady) gives birth to her master.***

***2. When the shepherds of black camels start boasting and competing with others in the construction of higher buildings. And the Hour is one of five things which nobody knows except Allah.***

***The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) then recited: "Verily, with Allah (Alone) is the knowledge of the Hour--."*** (31. 34)

(al-Bukhari from <https://sunnah.com/bukhari:50>)

The Qur'an, unlike the *ḥadīths*, does not give much information about the apocalyptic or millenarian events to take place as portents of the Hour. In the words of Professor Barbara Stowasser:

[T]he Qur'an gives only the sparsest detail on any portents that would indicate the hour's imminent arrival. Among the signs of the hour is the observable disintegration of established familial, societal, and economic norms. Then, "When the word is fulfilled against them (the sinners), We shall produce for them from the earth a beast to speak to them, because people did not believe with assurance in Our signs," (S. 27:82, Middle Meccan); the nations of Gog and Magog will break through their ancient barrier wall and sweep down to scourge the earth (S. 21:96–97, Middle Meccan); and Jesus is "a sign of the hour" (43:61, Middle Meccan). By contrast, the Qur'anic revelations provide an abundance of eschatological detail that begins with God's cosmic undoing of the "old world" followed by the last judgment and creation of a "new world" of everlasting paradise and hell. Thus, while the "terrestrial signs of the hour" remain a relatively marginal theme in the Qur'anic message, the actual occurrence of doom (destruction of the cosmos and cosmic time), resurrection, last judgment, and individual assignment to an eternal abode of beatitude or torment are a fully developed part of Qur'anic doctrine. ...it is the Hadith that furnishes a vast variety of detail on the portents of the hour that signify its imminence.

Stowasser elaborates on the traditional apocalyptic narratives of classical Muslim scholars as follows:

Muslim theologians and historians would refer to these times of turmoil in early Islamic history as *fitna* ["secession, upheaval, seduction, anarchy"]. It was also by the concept of *fitna*, in its plural *fitan*, that the compilers of Hadith collections inscribed their chapters on the turmoils that signal the end of the world. Over time, a small portion of the apocalyptic Hadith gained canonical status (in Sunni Islam) by way of its inclusion in the legal foundational texts and, especially, the canonical Hadith collections (The Six Books of "Sound Traditions") that have held prominence in Sunni doctrine and law since their first appearance.

With regard to the views of modernist Sunni scholars, Stowasser has this to say:

Nineteenth- and twentieth-century Sunni modernist thought has more systematically questioned the authenticity of this apocalyptic Hadith, referring to it by the older label of *isra'iliyyat* ("Bible-derived traditions"), that hold at best some symbolic significance. Such language from the likes of the Egyptian modernist theologian Muhammad Abduh (d.1905) or his Syrian disciple Rashid Rida (d.1935) can induce apoplectic rage in the more literalist, traditionalist contemporary compilers of the classical Hadith, for whom every detail of the transmitted texts is true. (Barbara F. Stowasser ( "The End is Near: Minor and Major Signs of the Hour in Islamic Texts and Contexts" Barbara Freyer Stowasser (2002), MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies, Yale University from <https://css.ethz.ch/en/services/digital-library/publications/publication.html/46623>)

Be that as it may, Muslim scholars are generally agreed that there are Minor Signs (*Ashrāṭ al-Sā'ah al-Ṣuġhrā*) and Major Signs (*Ashrāṭ al-Sā'ah al-Kubrā*) of the Hour, with differences in the details and sequence of events. The summary of the Major Signs as explained by Abul A`la Mawdudi is worth quoting here:

The time of the fulfillment of the true promise [of Allah SWT] as stated in S. 21: 97 will come on the eve of Resurrection and the appearance of Gog and Magog will be a sign of it. In a tradition related in Muslim, by Huzaifah bin Asid Ghifari, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Resurrection will not take place until ten signs appear: (1) The smoke [enveloping the world] (2) [The advent of the False Messiah,] the *Dajjāl* [who will create havoc, deception and destruction all over the world] (3) The [appearance of the] Beast from the earth (*Dabbat al-Arḍ*) (4) The rising of the sun from the West. (5) [The descent of]

Jesus, son of Mary (peace be upon him) [who will fight and kill the *Dajjāl* and will rule the world in peace and justice] (6) The sudden attack [and invasion] of Gog and Magog. (7-9) Three [major] earth depressions (or swallowing of the earth), one in the East, the second in the West and the third in Arabia. (10) The flare up of a great fire from Yaman which will drive the people to the Plain of Resurrection.

In another tradition the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated that after the swoop of Gog and Magog, Resurrection will be so near that it may take place at any moment just as a pregnant woman might deliver the child at any moment, in the day or night, after her term has expired. But the reference to the appearance of Gog and Magog in the Quran and *Hadith* does not indicate that they will swoop on mankind jointly. It may be that they will clash against each other near the time of Resurrection and their mutual conflict might result in a universal catastrophe and destruction. (Sayyid Abul A`la Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding The Qur'an (Tafhim al-Qur'an*, tr. Zafar Ishaq Ansari, Islamic Foundation, UK, 2007).

With regard to the Hour happening unexpectedly, the Qur'an states:

***(S.47:18) Then do they await except that the hour should come upon them unexpectedly? But already there have come [some of] its indications. Then what good to them, when it has come, will be their remembrance?***

As for the minor signs which the Prophet (S.A.W.) presumably prophesied or forecasted, we can say that some of them have already taken place, some are happening in our time and some others have yet to materialise. This is the way the Islamic Finder Organisation divides the Minor Signs:

A). Events that have already taken place:

1. Splitting of the moon (Sahih al-Bukhari, Book 56: 830)
2. A form of death, which will kill thousands of Muslims (Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol 4: book 53: 401)
3. A major fighting in Madinah (understood to be the battle of al-Harrah during the caliphate of Yazid)
4. The Muslim conquest of Jerusalem (Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol 4: book 53: 401)
5. The Muslim conquest of Constantinople (Sahih Muslim, book 41: 6924)
6. Two large groups of Muslims will fight in a war (Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol 9: book 88: 237)
7. A war between the Muslims and a reddish people with small eyes, wearing sandals made of hair (Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol 4: book 52: 179)



8. A peace agreement between the Muslims and non-Muslims from the yellow race (understood to be the Chinese, Mongols etc.)
9. 30 impostors will appear, each thinking he is a prophet (Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol 9: book 88: 237)

#### B) Events that are happening at present

1. Naked, destitute, barefoot shepherds will compete in building tall buildings (Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol 1: book 2: 47)
2. The slave-woman will give birth to her master or mistress (Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol 6: book 60: 300)
3. A trial (fitnah) which will enter every Arab household (Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol 4: book 53: 401)
4. Knowledge will be taken away (by the death of people of knowledge), and ignorance will prevail (Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol 1: book 3: 80)
5. Wine (intoxicants, alcohol) will be drunk in great quantities (Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol 1: book 3: 80)
6. Zina will become widespread (Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol 1: book 3: 80)
7. Earthquakes will increase (Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol 2: book 17: 146)
8. Time will pass more quickly (Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol 2: book 17: 146)
9. Tribulations (fitnah) will prevail (Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol 2: book 17: 146)
10. Bloodshed will increase (Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol 2: book 17: 146)
11. A man will pass by the grave of another and wish he was in the latter's place (Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol 9: book 88: 237)
12. Trustworthiness will be lost, i.e. when authority is entrusted to those who do not deserve it (Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol 1: book 3: 56)
13. People will gather for prayer, but will be unable to find an imam to lead them (Sunan Abu Dawud, Book 2: 0581)

#### C) Events that are yet to happen (among them are the ten Major Signs)

1. The number of men will decrease, whilst the number of women will increase, until for every man there are 50 women (Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol 1: book 3: 81)
2. The Euphrates will reveal a treasure of gold, and many will die fighting over it, each one hoping to be the one who gains the treasure (Sahih Muslim, Book 041: 6918)
3. The Romans will come to a place called A'maq or Wabiq, and an army of the best people will go forth from Madinah to face them (Sahih Muslim, Book 041: 6924)
4. The Muslim conquest of Rome [meaning Constantinople] (Sahih Muslim, Book 041: 6721)
5. The Mahdi (the Guided One) will appear, and be the Imam of the Muslims (Sunan Abu Dawud, Book 36: 4272)
6. Jesus, son of Mary (peace be upon him) will descend in Damascus, and pray behind the Mahdi (Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol 3: book 43: 656)
7. Jesus will break the cross and kill the swine, i.e. destroy the false Christianity (Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol 3: book 43: 656)

8. The *Dajjāl* (al-Masih al-Dajjal, the False Messiah) will appear, with all his tools of deception, and be an immense trial. He will be followed by 70,000 Jews from Isfahan (Sahih Muslim, Book 041: 7034)
  9. The appearance of Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj (Gog and Magog), and the associated tribulations) (Sahih Muslim, Book 041: 6931)
  10. The emergence of the Beast from the Earth, carrying the Staff of Moses and the Seal of Solomon, who will speak to the people, telling them they did not believe with certainty in the Divine Signs ) (Sahih Muslim, Book 041: 6931)
  11. A major war between the Muslims (including Jews and Christians who truly believe in Jesus after his return) led by the Imam Mahdi, and the Jews plus other non-Muslims led by the *Dajjāl* (Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol 4: book 52: 177)
  12. Prophet `Isa (peace be upon him) will kill the *Dajjāl* at the gate of Ludd (Lod in present-day Israel, site of an airport and a major Israeli military base) (Sahih Muslim, Book 041: 7015)
  13. A time of great peace and serenity during and after the remaining lifetime of Prophet `Isa (peace be upon him) (Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol 3: book 43: 656)
  14. Arabia will become a land of gardens and rivers (Sahih Muslim, Book 005: 2208)
  15. Society will then decay (Sunan Abu Dawud, Book 14: 2529)
  16. The buttocks of the women of the tribe of Daws will again sway in circumambulation (tawaf) around the idol Dhul-Khulsah (Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol 9: book 88: 232)
  17. A great fire in the Hijaz, seen by the inhabitants of Busra (Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol 9: book 88: 232)
  18. Three major armies will sink into the earth [swallowing of the earth]: one in the East, one in the West, one in Arabia (Sahih Muslim, Book 041: 6931)
  19. An Abyssinian leader with thin shins will destroy the Ka'bah (Sahih Muslim, Book 041: 6951)
  20. The huge cloud of smoke will cover the earth (Sahih Muslim, Book 041: 6931)
  21. The sun will rise from the west (its place of setting) (Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol 6: book 60: 159)
  22. A gentle wind which will take the souls of the believers (Sahih Muslim, Book 041: 7015)
  23. There is no-one left on the earth saying, "Allah, Allah" or "There is no god except Allah." (Sahih Muslim, Book 001: 0273)
  24. Eventually, the Day of Judgment is established upon the worst of the people, who copulate like donkeys in public (Sahih Muslim, Book 041: 7015)
  25. The blowing of the Trumpet by the Angel Israfil, upon which everyone will faint and die except as Allah wills (Sahih Muslim, Book 041: 7023)
  26. The second blowing of the Trumpet, upon which everyone will be resurrected (Sahih Muslim, Book 041: 7023)
- (<https://www.islamicfinder.org/news/48-signs-of-qiyamah/Accessed on May 18, 2021>)

As the Minor Signs are mainly manifestations of the rising tide of spiritual, moral and ethical decadence, mischief and violence among mankind, plus extraordinary environmental catastrophes, the Muslim futures thinking, planning and actualising should give adequate attention to the strengthening of *īmān*, *taqwā*, *ihsān*

and *maḥabbah* of Allah among the masses as well as the leaders, without neglecting the strengthening of scientific, technological, economic, political, defence, educational and leadership qualities of the *Ummah Wasat*. All these Islamic targets, objectives and goals boil down to the most important educational institution in Islam, i.e. the family.

It is our conviction that many currently insidious, toxic, inhuman, immoral, *munkar* or *ḥarām* trends in mass culture, contemporary art, social media, information-communication industry, entertainment, financial systems, capitalistic business, secular humanistic modernity, unjust legal systems, liberal feminism, LGBTQ global movement and unethical politics at home and abroad -- as manifestations of secularised contemporary civilisation which defines this era of *Ākhir al-Zamān* -- are seriously eroding the institution of the family and the traditional role of parents. Muslim families in Western countries and in urban cosmopolitan cities of Muslim countries are being undermined by the combined effects of these immoral and nihilistic social and cultural realities. The Muslim children are the most vulnerable as they get exposed at very early years to the immoral, unethical or unislamic content of the social media, the Internet and television. Now almost all the negative cultural values and toxic immoral viruses are available and accessible in the personal hand phones of the younger generation. Muslim women are also becoming easy targets of subtle indoctrination techniques from heartless capitalistic fashion industry, Western feminist ideologies and the glittering adornments of materialistic ways of life. When they become mothers, the economic and career development pressures of urban life often provide them little time to give proper motherly attention or to impart Islamic educational values to the young children. Many Muslim teenage youngsters are already becoming more detached – if not more addicted to the social media culture -- and therefore they become more out of reach from parental surveillance or moral guidance as they get deeper into the in-culture of their social-media peers. As these young people grow up in the morally chaotic, intellectually confusing and spiritually-starved culture of *Ākhir al-Zamān*, the Muslim younger generation may be on the way to becoming the “lost generation” of the Muslim *ummah*. Many conscientious Muslim parents are facing serious problems to manage their family responsibilities and obligations as they too are not immune to the viruses attacking the younger minds and souls.

We believe this is an existential crisis in many Muslim countries, let alone for the Muslim communities living in Western countries and cultures. As this is an emergency situation, the Muslim futures planning must give priority also to the agenda of re-education of the Muslim family, with special concentration on children and women as part of the larger spiritual-moral rearmament of the family institution. The role of the Muslim family as the primary Islamic religious and moral educational institution of the *ummah* is in dire need of protection and immunity against the toxic trends of liberalism, nihilism, hedonism and materialism. The Muslim family is the last bastion of Islamic spiritual values, moral integrity and ethical excellence as it faces increasing moral decadence, globalising political hypocrisy, fragmentation of human societies and the collapse of ethical civilisation.

Even if the Major Signs begin to appear in the near or distant future, it would be the duty of Islamic leaders, scholars, intellectuals and professionals of that period to plan the appropriate preparations, responses and strategies collectively and wisely to ensure that the Muslim *ummah* does not abandon its vision and mission of civilisational leadership despite the globalising apocalyptic phenomena. The *ummah* must be made aware by the enlightened scholars and committed intellectuals that having to go through the Minor or, later, the Major Signs of the Hour, is part of Allah's knowledge, plans, trials and tribulations for mankind, but by remaining firmly on the Straight Path, looking forward to the promises of Paradise and grasping firmly the "strongest hand-hold" ("*al-urwah al-wuthqā*"), namely the Qur'an, the Party of Allah ("*Hizbu'LLāh*"), the God-fearing scholars ("*Innama yakhsha'LLāha min `ibādihi'l-`ulamā*"), the *Ulu'l-Albāb* type personalities, the true Slaves of the Compassionate ("*ibād al-Raḥmān*"), those who strive in the Path of Allah SWT ("*al-Mujāhidūn fī sabīli'LLāh*") and the true believers ("*al-Mu'minūn*") will not succumb to the deceptions and temptations coming from the Party of Satan (*Hizbu'S-Shaitān*) or the power of *Dajjāl* (whoever he might be or what the *Dajjāl* enigma really means) and His followers.

The way of the believers (*sabīl al-mu'minīn*) as instructed by Allah SWT and actualised by the Prophet (S.A.W.) is to be strong collectively, spiritually, morally, intellectually, physically and materially to face the inimical and demonic forces or conspiracies of *Kufr* (disbelief), *Shirk* (polytheism), *Nifāq* (hypocrisy or double-standard behaviour), *Fasād* (corruption, mischief and decadence), or *Ilhād* (atheism). With respect to the emotional and psychological relationship with Allah

SWT, the highest values which can sustain the true believers under the most trying circumstances are those of absolute trust (*tawakkul*) in Allah SWT, fear of His displeasure (*khauf*), hope (*rajā'*) in His mercy, benevolence and succour (*naṣr*) and love (*maḥabbah*) of Him, His Final Messenger(S.A.W.) and striving in His cause.. When confronted with adverse circumstances with different kinds of afflictions, the true believers learn to develop greater capacity for more perseverance (*sabr*) determination, and self-sacrifices, while inwardly engaged with remembrance of Allah SWT, in order to execute successfully their Divinely-prescribed missions of servitude (*ʿubūdiyyah*), vicegerency (*khilāfah*) and civilisational growth (*ʿumrān*). Under these severe *fitnah* circumstances, we will have to allow some members of Sufi brotherhood (*ṭarīqah*) to retreat to remote places for them to undergo special mystical experiences for personal reasons and for more intimate communion with the Divine Master. They too will play their proper role in their own way, according to their own orthodox Sufi tradition. Naturally, as apocalyptic events increase and living as believers in Islam becomes more hazardous, the leaders of the Muslim communities will have to cling more firmly to the path of Allah SWT, while placing their complete reliance in the power and will of Allah SWT, knowing that Allah's many promises to help the believers and the people of *taqwā* to overcome the negative challenges of worldly life will be fulfilled, one way or the other.

Coming back to the current challenges from the ongoing unfolding of the Minor Signs of the Day of Judgement in the world today, we believe it is necessary that Muslim futuristic planners, Muslim governments and Islamic NGOs develop Islamic holistic education institutions, and establish special spiritual education (*tarbiyah rūḥiyyah*) programmes aimed at inculcating, internalising and operationalising all the fundamental spiritual values and principles mentioned above. In facing the trials of ongoing moral decadence, nihilism, increase in deviant millenarian cults or demonic design in Muslim communities as well as in non-Muslim nations around the world, the organisations of true believers have to be more creative, innovative and audacious than before in marshalling and galvanising Islamic resources locally and internationally, to protect Muslim and non-Muslim lives, properties and institutions including the bonds of Islamic unity and solidarity from destructive or disruptive human or technological futures. The aim of Islamic socio-religious groups and communities should be to operate – in the face of mounting obstacles, societal disruptions or onslaughts of *Kufr-Shirk-Nifāq* conspiracies -- as a

single body which is spiritually, morally, intellectually, physically and economically resilient with profound God-fearing consciousness as the unifying spiritual bond that transcends ethnic, national and international boundaries. Hopefully, these efforts would earn the pleasure of Allah SWT and secure for the Muslim *ummah* as well as innocent and friendly non-Muslim communities the unseen protection of Allah SWT from the onslaught of evil, hegemonic, apocalyptic or millenarian forces in the age of '*fitnah ākhir al-zamān*' (tribulation of End of Times).

The Muslim communities and organisations need to be reassured and reminded that "Allah SWT will not change the conditions of a people until they change what is in themselves (including their souls)" (S. 13: 11). Under whatever circumstances, Muslim individuals, organisations and communities must possess the conviction in the Islamic creed that whatever Allah SWT has willed to happen to them will happen no matter what they do to avoid it, and whatever Allah SWT has not willed to happen to them will not happen however much the hostile forces intend to harm them. But they should also remember the advice given by the Prophet (S.A.W.) that even if they know that the world is about to end soon, if they have a sapling in their hands, they should plant it in the soil, and leave the result to Allah SWT. After all, they are going to be evaluated by Allah SWT in the Hereafter for the positive, lawful, morally right and beneficial acts they have done, however small they may be, despite the overwhelmingly hopeless atmosphere of the impending Doom. The authentic *hadith* states:

Anas ibn Malik reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "***If the Resurrection were established upon one of you while he has in his hand a sapling, then let him plant it.***" (Musnad of Ahmad)

Reverting to the issue of the Major Signs, Muslim scholars are agreed that they would occur successively as the Hour will be fast approaching. However, there is one major sign that we Muslims should keep in mind, because it is reportedly prophesied by Prophet Muḥammad (S.A.W.). That is the advent of the Master Deceiver and False Messiah, *al-Dajjāl*, which is mentioned in several authentic *ḥadīths*. We have no doubt that mankind and the Muslim *ummah* have been facing the menace and negative influence from several trends from among the Minor Signs already. But as for the dreadful phenomenon of *Dajjāl*, Muslims have been warned about his advent in many Prophetic predictions, although controversies among

scholars regarding the interpretations about the meaning of *Dajjal* remain unresolved. Yet, it is useful to look at five *ḥadīth* narrations from the collection of al-Bukhārī, because it is said that the word *Dajjāl* appears 83 times in 53 hadiths in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*:

Narrated Anas bin Malik: Allah's Apostle said, "Ad-**dajjal** will come to Medina and find the angels guarding it. If Allah will, neither Ad-**dajjal** nor plague will be able to come near it." (Book #93, Hadith #565)

Narrated Abu Said Al-Khudri: Allah's Apostle told us a long narrative about Ad-**dajjal**, and among the many things he mentioned, was his saying, "Ad-**dajjal** will come and it will be forbidden for him to pass through the entrances of Medina. He will land in some of the salty barren areas (outside) Medina; on that day the best man or one of the best men will come up to him and say, 'I testify that you are the same **dajjal** whose description was given to us by Allah's Apostle .' Ad-**dajjal** will say to the people, 'If I kill this man and bring him back to life again, will you doubt my claim?' They will say, 'No.' Then Ad-**dajjal** will kill that man and bring him back to life. That man will say, 'Now I know your reality better than before.' Ad-**dajjal** will say, 'I want to kill him but I cannot.' " (Book #30, Hadith #106)

Narrated Abdullah bin Umar: Allah's Apostle said, "Today I saw myself in a dream near the Ka'ba. I saw a whitish brown man, the handsomest of all brown men you might ever see. He had the most beautiful Limma (hair hanging down to the earlobes) you might ever see. He had combed it and it was dripping water; and he was performing the Tawaf around the Kaba leaning on two men or on the shoulders of two men. I asked, "Who is this?" It was said. "Messiah, the son of Mary." Suddenly I saw a curly-haired man, blind in the right eye which looked like a protruding out grape. I asked, "Who is this?" It was said, "He is Masiah Ad-**dajjal**." (Book #72, Hadith #789)

Narrated 'Aisha: (the wife of the Prophet) Allah's Apostle used to invoke Allah in the prayer saying "*Allahumma inni a'udhu bika min adhabil-qabri, wa a'udhu bika min fitnatil-masihid-dajjal, wa a'udhu bika min fitnatil-mahya wa fitnatil-mamati. Allahumma inni a'udhu bika minal-mathami wal-maghrami.* (O Allah, I seek refuge with You from the punishment of the grave and from the afflictions of Masih Ad-**dajjal** and from the afflictions of life and death. O Allah, I seek refuge with You from the sins and from being in debt)." Somebody said to him, "Why do you so frequently seek refuge with Allah from being in debt?" The Prophet replied, "A person in debt tells lies whenever he speaks, and breaks promises whenever he makes (them)." 'Aisha also

narrated: I heard Allah's Apostle in his prayer seeking refuge with Allah from the afflictions of Ad-**dajjal**. (Book [#12](#), Hadith [#795](#))

Narrated Abu Huraira : Allah's Apostle used to invoke (Allah): "*Allahumma ini a'udhu bika min 'adhabi-l-Qabr, wa min 'adhabi-nnar, wa min fitnati-l-mahya wa-Imamat, wa min fitnati-l-masih ad-dajjal*. (O Allah! I seek refuge with you from the punishment in the grave and from the punishment in the Hell fire and from the afflictions of life and death, and the afflictions of Al-Masih Ad-**dajjal**." (Book [#23](#), Hadith [#459](#))

(<https://www.searchtruth.com/searchHadith.php?keyword=dajjal&book>  
Accessed on May 19, 2021)

From several other *ḥadīths* about the *Dajjāl* being one of the ten Major Signs of the Hour, we are told that he would be so powerful and supernaturally-endowed that many people would be seduced by him, and no one could overcome him, until Prophet `Īsā (peace be upon him) comes and kills him in a miraculous way. Without committing ourselves to any one of the controversial interpretations regarding this phenomenon as a Major Sign of the Day of Judgement, we would nevertheless like to benefit spiritually, morally and ummatically from the well-known supplication which the Prophet (S.A.W.) taught the Muslims as mentioned in one of the above *ḥadīths* which is translated as:

***“O Allah! I seek Your protection from the torture of hell, and I seek Your protection from the torture of the grave, and I seek refuge with You from the mischief of life and death, and I seek Your protection from the mischief of Dajjal pretending as Messiah.”*** (al-Bukhārī)

Thus, in facing contemporary moral decadence, widespread corruption, oppression, deceptions, violence, political hypocrisies, global *fasād* or, in anticipation of future menaces, turbulence and tribulations on a global scale, Muslim scholars, thinkers, intellectuals and leaders must continue to seek ways and means of making the Muslim community holistically and comprehensively impregnable to stem the future tide of inimical and evil forces, without having to associate them with the phenomena of the False Messiah or the advent of the Mahdi (the Rightly Guided One) because, as it is, nobody knows the identity of the Mahdi or the real *Dajjāl*, going by the texts of the relevant *ḥadīths*. They should be involved in making adequate preparations – spiritually, intellectually, culturally, economically, politically and technologically – for the Muslim *ummah* to counter anti-Islamic global forces as well as the non-conventional weapons or ideological viruses they employ to poison



the minds of young Muslims or create havoc and instabilities in Muslim societies. The focus should be on the existing anti-Islamic global forces without forgetting the responsibility to work for the actualisation of the Ummah Wasat community, society, state or civilisation, for this is expressly and explicitly declared by Allah SWT in the Qur'an. The task of bearing the civilisational and ummatic witnessing (*shahadah*) has to be continuously pursued by all Muslims, with or without the Mahdi, Dajjal or Gog and Magog.

In the near or distant future when the Major Signs begin to appear one after the other in the world, the *Dajjāl* phenomena and menace could well be among the greatest trials for mankind and the Muslim communities. Under those extremely adverse circumstances, only Allah SWT can help and protect the believers, until the *Dajjāl* terror, threats, violence, corruption and deceptions are destroyed by the miraculous power of Prophet `Īsā (peace be upon him), or by ways only known to Allah SWT. It is important to mention at this juncture that as far as the *Shī'ah* community is concerned, their hope in the future is tied to the advent of the Mahdi, as faith in the Mahdi is an integral part of the Shi'ite creed. In their belief, he would definitely come to defeat the evil forces and become the Righteous Ruler who will fill the earth with peace and justice for several years. The belief in the Mahdi, however, is not part of the *Sunnī* creed, but to many Sunnis his future appearance - - as and when Allah SWT wills it -- shall be to prepare the way for the second coming of Prophet `Īsā (on whom be peace) who will be empowered by Allah SWT to confront and destroy the terrible menace of the powerful and tyrannical dominance of the *Dajjāl* phenomena. He would also destroy the erroneous and heavily interpolated religion which has been wrongfully attributed to him, and would reinstate the one original religion of Allah SWT that he had preached in Aramaic language – not Greek or Hebrew -- in his first dispensation, namely the religion of true and complete submission (*islām*) to the One and Only True God, Allah SWT, and to be the leader of the Muslim *ummah* then.

With regard to facing the future of apocalyptic phenomena, the Prophet (S.A.W.) has advised his followers in the *ḥadīth* collected by Muslim that the believers should make it a habit to read *Sūrah al-Kahf*, or at least memorise the first ten verses of the *Sūrah* regularly (many pious Muslims do this on Fridays or Friday

nights) as a way of supplicating for Divine assistance and protection against the future menace of the *Dajjāl* powers or *pro-Dajjāl* demonic forces oppressing Muslim societies locally or internationally as part of Islamophobic global networks. But the most popular and most widely taught supplication in all Muslim societies is “O our Lord and Sustainer! Give us *hasanah* in this world and *hasanah* in the next world, and protect us from the punishment of the Fire”.

## 9.CONCLUSION

We have tried to show in this chapter that the futures planning of Muslims who know and are committed to Islam is necessarily different from the futuristic thinking and philosophical framework of secular humanist, agnostic or atheistic societies. The knowledge of the Qur’anic vision and worldview is crucial as the proper ontological, metaphysical, axiological and ethical framework for believers of Allah SWT to plan and work for their future as individuals, families, groups, organisations, communities, states and civilisation. We have emphasised the key role of *īmān* (including its *ḥalāwah*, or sweetness) in Allah SWT, the Hereafter and the Day of Judgement, to be followed by blissful life in Paradise or misery and shame in Hell as the most important basis of holistic futures planning of Muslims in this era of global crisis, emergencies and turmoil towards achieving *ḥasanah* in this world and *ḥasanah* in the Hereafter.

When Muslims plan for the future in accordance with the worldview and vision of the Qur’an, they should be planning on the fundamental belief in the *dunyā-ākhirah* continuum that Allah SWT teaches, for the attainment of all the necessary requirements for goodness and wellbeing in this world (as the Qur’an defines it), for Muslim individuals, families, groups, communities, societies, states or civilisation, so that the this-worldly economic, social, cultural and political objectives will put them on the right path to their permanent and final goals in the Hereafter, and not down the valley of real loss and misery (*al-Khusrān*). Planning to make the *ḥasanah* worldly achievements as means of achieving the *ḥasanah* otherworldly goals is the decisive factor for attainment of real success and wellbeing (*al-Falāḥ*). This entails the ability to infuse the relevant spiritual-moral values such as *ḥalāl*, *ṭayyib*, *iṣlāḥ* (proper reform), *wasāṭiyyah* (justice, goodness, excellence and rightly balanced)

*īmān, iḥsān, taqwā, husnu'l-khuluq (good character), or riḍwāna'LLāh, etc. in all pursuits, activities, professional careers, including the political, in this worldly life (al-ḥayāt al-dunyā).*

We also maintain that the Qur'anic vision of human life provides mankind the true and proper launching pad for individual, social and civilisational reform and transformation. This Divine revelation-based vision provides the correct theological, metaphysical and ethical framework from which Muslims understand, first, who they are; their true natures and where they come from and where they are supposed to go ultimately; their true goals and destiny in the Hereafter; their responsibilities in this world as obedient servants, trustworthy vicegerents and sincere believers or committed members of the Party of Allah (*Ḥizbu'LLāh*) as opposed to the members of the Party of Satan (*Ḥizb'ush-Shaiṭān*). It makes them understand that the life of believers in Islam is a series of trials, tribulations and afflictions; in fact, human life and human history portray the constant struggle between Truth and Falsehood, between the temptations of the *Nafs, Hawā, the promises of Satan* and the *ghurūr of al-Ḥayāt al-Dunyā* on the one hand, and the call of Allah SWT and His Messengers, the promises of Allah SWT and the promises of *al-Jannah* on the other hand. It makes them know who their true friends as well as their true enemies are – internally and externally – as well as the God-given material and non-material resources to be utilised as means of gaining *al-Falāḥ* and averting *al-Khusrān* while travelling on the Straight Path of Islam. It is the Straight Path of Allah SWT alone, the Qur'an reiterates, that would deliver them safely, soundly and triumphantly to the life of eternal bliss and happiness in the Paradise of Allah SWT.

As individual believers, the aim of futures planning for them as individuals is to achieve the good in this world by excelling in all the necessary and legitimate *dunyawī* pursuits and the good in the Hereafter, and to avoid the *`adhāb* (punishment) in the grave, the chaos of the Resurrection, the profound shame and remorse from the Divine Judgement at Allah's Court of Absolute Justice, and the most painful and miserable suffering in Hell fire. As true believers, they look forward, as they supplicate for the compassion and forgiveness from Allah SWT, to His blessings, assistance and mercy to make their journey in this world to the grave and to the Divine Court of Judgement a safe and stress-free journey, hoping for a light

accounting (*ḥisāb*) and finally entry in to Allah's Paradise with all the undescrivable joy, happiness and comfort. The greatest joy and happiness for them are to earn the good pleasure of Allah SWT and to feast their vision on the majestic *Al-Nūr* (The Divine Light) and *Al-Jamāl* (Divine Beauty) of their Compassionate Master and Sustainer in Paradise.

As for Muslim organisations, institutions, countries and the *ummah* of Muhammad (S.A.W.), their futures planning in the world shall also be in line with the twin *ḥasanah* goals of life, but it is world-affirming and mainly geared towards playing the leading role, here and now, as competent, ethical civilisational builders with the qualities of *Ummah Wasaṭ* which include the principles of justice, goodness, being the best, being justly balanced, strength, self-reliance -- for the benefit of the whole of mankind -- and the ability to spread the messages and the promises of Islam as representing the Prophetic mission of *Raḥmatan li'l-`Ālamīn* (compassion and mercy to all the worlds) in this world, as well as becoming collective Witnesses (*shuhadā'*) of Islamic excellence in this world and in the next, because on the day of Judgement the Prophet (S.A.W.) shall be a witness against the *ummah*.

Their pursuit of worldly success, civilisational leadership, progress and advancement would be unsustainable and hampered by many internal or external obstacles, if they fail to get Allah's blessings, assistance, protection, guidance, mercy and favours because in their development policies and modernisation strategies, they tend to follow the secular humanistic models of the so-called "developed" or "advanced" countries, forgetting that those models of development, progress, modernity and advancement are essentially in the material dimensions of life, thanks to their scientific and technological prowess. Some of those so-called progress, modernity and advancement are completely antithetical to the Islamic conceptions of progress, modernity and advancement, while some aspects of modernity are compatible with Islamic values and norms, and are therefore worthy of emulation, adoption or assimilation. As far as the areas of holistic human development, equitable economic growth, sound family values, spirituality, morality and ethics are concerned, those so-called "advanced" societies are leading mankind to spiritual and moral "wasteland", disasters and catastrophes. From the perspective of the worldview of the Qur'an, such societies are in reality going down the slippery slope of *al-Khusrān* (true loss, misery and suffering), *Kufr* (disbelief and denial of

Divine truths), *Nifāq* (hypocrisy and double standards) *Zulm* (injustice and oppression), *Fasād* (moral corruption, decadence and mischief) and *Ghafflah* (heedlessness, disregard for Divine guidance). These components of secular modernity and progress are to be rejected, opposed and countered, not by violence, but by rational argumentation, intellectual and scholarly *da`wah*, and peaceful inter-civilisational dialogue. It is tragic, however, that in the Muslim world, under the influence of secular modernity, techno-centric civilisation and capitalistic economic-political systems, many contemporary leaders and decision-makers of Muslim organisations, institutions, countries and governments fail to make the Hereafter as their final goal, the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* as the main Guide, and the Prophet (S.A.W.) as their true Leader and Exemplar. But we believe the advent of COVID 19 may lead eventually to positive changes and transformations in Muslim countries as the old corrupt leaders see how their economic or political idols crumble before the invasion of the invisible microscopic enemies.

It is our hope and prayer that the new leaders of Muslim nations in post-pandemic times will change the direction and intellectual *qiblah* of Muslim communities by going back on and remain steadfast upon the Straight Path of Allah SWT. They will then know from their new engagement with, and profound study and deep contemplation of the messages of, the Qur'an the *Sunnah* how to recognise, understand and overcome the subtle seductions, whisperings (*waswasah*), suggestions (*hamazāt*) and footsteps (*khutuwāt*) of Satan (their sworn enemy), the evil inclinations of their own base desires (their own inner enemies), the ornamental deceptions and comforting delusions of this-worldly profane life (the *zīnah* and *matā` al-ḥayāt al-dunyā*), the hypocrisies of hegemonic and oppressive world powers and the evil machinations of the internal *Munāfiqūn* (the true hypocrites). This is among the many reminders and positive promises of Allah SWT to His sincere, repentant and humble Servants.

An Islamic university such as IIUM should be among the vanguard of contemporary educational institutions in the Muslim world which educate, train and motivate the future Muslim leaders, intelligentsia, scholars, intellectuals and professionals on the basis of the worldview of *Tauḥīd*. It is this God-given worldview and vision of mankind's future in it which will provide the future leaders of the *ummah* and mankind with the new compass, new strengths and new tools to undertake the

decolonisation, liberation and empowerment processes of the Muslim *ummah* and humanity as a whole, thereby freeing them intellectually, psychologically and spiritually from the long bondage – self-imposed or otherwise -- to false ideologies, false messiahs, false deities and false paradises.

The current COVID 19 pandemic which exposes the real strengths and weaknesses of secular, agnostic, capitalist and socialist societies, together with the hypocrisies of wealthy Muslim nations, should be a general wake-up call to Muslim nations, leaders, elites, intellectuals, professionals to abandon the secular conventional paradigms of development, and seek the right knowledge and wisdom from the revealed paradigm of holistic human and civilisational growth. The new global health crisis together with prolonged economic, political and moral turmoil offer mankind the justification as well as the opportunity for devising new futuristic visions, plans and paradigms which guarantee alternative and the preferred future scenarios of true happiness, true success, true prosperity, true wellbeing and true progress in the everlasting Hereafter: the proper Place of Return for the “Slaves” (*‘abīd*) who were created by the Wise Creator to serve Him and then to return to Him.

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