

Misconceptions about Islam

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In the Name of Allah the Most Gracious the Most Merciful

Introduction

Misconceptions about Islam are raised by two types of people, the ignorant and the enemies of Islam. The ignorant spread misconceptions without knowing the truth about Islam but once some of them know the truth, they stop. However, the enemies of Islam intend to spread misconceptions in order to defame Islam even if they know the truth about it. *"It is a trouble if you do not know (the truth) and the trouble is greater if you really know"*. When someone raises a misconception about Islam, he is belying Allah because Islam is the true religion of Allah. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿قَدْ نَعْلَمُ إِنَّهُ لَيَحْزُنُكَ الَّذِي يَقُولُونَ فَإِنَّهُمْ لَا يُكَذِّبُونَكَ وَلَكِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ يَجْحَدُونَ

﴿٣٣﴾ (الأنعام:33)

"We know that you, [O Muhammad], are saddened by what they say. And indeed, they do not call you untruthful, but it is the verses of Allah that the wrongdoers reject". [The Qur'an 6:33]

We are going to address the major misconceptions about Islam and clarify the truth for people in order to guide them and to warn any one about the consequences of raising misconceptions against Islam in the Hellfire in the Hereafter. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾ (البقرة:39)

"And those who disbelieved and denied Our signs-those will be companions of the Fire; they will abide therein eternally". [The Qur'an 2:39]

Misconceptions about Islamic Creed

The claim that Allah is the new God only for Muslims

Allah is the only God for the whole universe. He is the God of all humanity, including Muslims, Jews, and Christians. The word '*Allah*' is the Arabic word for God as *Aalah* or *Aaloh* is the Aramaic word for God and *Eloah* or *Elohim* is the Hebrew word for God. So the origin of the word '*Allah*' in Arabic, Aramaic, and Hebrew is the same because they are Semitic languages. The Old Testament in Hebrew used them in addressing God and they were translated into the word '*God*' in the English version. Also Christians and Jews in Arab countries call God '*Allah*' because the translation of the word '*God*' from the English version into the Arabic version of the Bible is '*Allah*'. Also some religious books of the Hindus such as book no 2 hymn no i verse ii, give God the attribute '*ila*' which is similar to the name of God in Arabic '*Allah*'.

Although Muslims, Jews, and Christians share the origin of the God's name, the essence of God in Islam differs from that in other religions. Muslims believe in God without son and other partners whereas people in other religions believe in God with other deities that are worshiped besides Him. For example, Christians believe in trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) and worship the three persons.

Allah is One with no son or partner. He is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. He is the All-Knowing of everything, visible or invisible in the whole universe; and His knowledge comprehends all things. He accomplished all affairs with wisdom. He is the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful Whose mercy encompasses all things. He is the Powerful and the Exalted in Might and no one shares His domain and power. He is just in all His decrees and far removed from injustice and tyranny. Allah is Ever-Living. He is above the seven heavens, above His throne in the manner that suits His majesty. He is the First before Whom there is none, the Last after Whom there is none, the Most High above Whom there is none, and the Internal nearer than Whom there is none. Allah neither begets nor is He begotten and there is none like unto Him. He is the All-Hearing All-Seeing, and none is equal to Him. Allah never indwells in any of His creatures nor do they indwell in Him. All His creatures stand in

need of Him and He stands in need of none. Allah loves good deeds and hates bad deeds. Creation, sovereignty, and authority belong exclusively to Allah. Allah is with us through His knowledge. He hears and sees us.

However, the common concept of other religions with regards to Allah is that specific men are god(s), or Allah has partners. Believing in false gods is against logic and those who believe in them have no reason to prove the truth. They follow after their parents or tribes blindly even when they see clear signs. But those who build beliefs according to logic and reason reject false gods once they see the signs. For example, while a young man was prostrating to an idol claimed to be his god, a dog walked into the temple and urinated on the idol. He was angry toward the dog at the beginning, but after that he realized that the idol could not be the lord of the universe.

Associating a partner with Allah in any form of worship such as praying, supplication, invocation, and sacrifice is called major shirk (polytheism). Shirk is the greatest sin and whoever dies upon shirk he/she shall enter Hell-fire in humiliation and Allah forbids paradise for him/her.

Therefore, the truth is that Allah (God) is the only One who has the right to be worshiped. Allah ordered all humans to believe that there is no god worthy of worship except Him. He told His Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, to call the people of scriptures (Jews and Christians) to worship none but Him:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُولُوا اشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ﴾ (آل عمران: 64)

"Say, "O People of the Scripture, come to a word that is equitable between us and you - that we will not worship except Allah and not associate anything with Him and not take one another as lords instead of Allah." But if they turn away, then say, "Bear witness that we are Muslims [submitting to Him]" . [The Qur'an 3:64]

Allah talks about Himself in plural expression

There are many Qur'anic verses in which Allah talks about Himself in the plural expression. For example Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿ إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ ﴿٩﴾ ﴾ (الحجر: 9)

"Indeed, it is We who sent down the Qur'an and indeed, We will be its guardian". [The Qur'an 15:9]

There are two types of plural, the plural of number and the plural of respect. The plural of respect has been normally used when a king or a president or a prime minister addresses his people. Allah used plural of respect such as "We" to stress His Greatness and His Majesty. This does not mean that Allah is more than one because the Oneness of Allah is the most essential creed which a believer has to fulfill. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿ قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ﴿١﴾ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ ﴿٢﴾ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهٗ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ ﴿٤﴾ ﴾ (الإخلاص: 1-4)

"Say, "He is Allah , [who is] One, Allah , the Eternal Refuge. He neither begets nor is born, Nor is there to Him any equivalent". [The Qur'an 112:1-4]

Also Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿ وَإِلَهُكُمْ إِلَهٌُ وَاحِدٌ ۚ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٣﴾ ﴾ (البقرة: 163)

"And your God is one God. There is no deity [worthy of worship] except Him, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful". [The Qur'an 2:163]

Allah forbade to believe or to say Allah is two or three. Allah has said,

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿ وَقَالَ اللَّهُ لَا تَتَّخِذُوا إِلَهَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ إِنَّمَا هُوَ إِلَهٌُ وَاحِدٌ فَإِنِّي فَارِهَبُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ ﴾ (النحل: 51)

"Do not take for yourselves two deities. He is but one God, so fear only Me." [The Qur'an 16:51]

Also Allah said,

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿ لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّكَ اللَّهُ تَالِثٌ ثَلَاثَةٌ وَمَا مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِلَّا إِلَهٌُ وَاحِدٌ وَإِن لَّمْ يَنْتَهُوا عَمَّا يَقُولُونَ لَيَمَسَّنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٣﴾ ﴾ (المائدة: 73)

"They have certainly disbelieved who say, "Allah is the third of three."And there is no god except one God. And if they do not desist from what they are saying, there will surely afflict the disbelievers among them a painful punishment." [The Qur'an 5:73]

Allah did not instruct His servants to worship two or three or more but Him the only One. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ﴾ (النحل: من الآية 36)

"And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, [saying], "Worship Allah and avoid Taghut (false gods)" . [The Qur'an 16:36]

In fact worshipping other deities beside Allah is the worse sin called "Shirk" or polytheism that takes a person out of faith and throws him or her in the Hell- fire. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ وَقَالَ الْمَسِيحُ يَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ مَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَأْوَاهُ النَّارُ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ﴾ (المائدة: 72)

"They have certainly disbelieved who say, "Allah is the Messiah, the son of Mary" while the Messiah has said, "O Children of Israel worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord." Indeed, he who associates others with Allah - Allah has forbidden him Paradise, and his refuge is the Fire. And there are not for the wrongdoers any helpers". [The Qur'an 5:72]

The claim that Muslims worship the Kabah and the Black Stone

Muslims go to the Sacred House in Makkah where they circle around Al-Kabah and kiss the Black Stone. Also Muslims face the direction of Al-Kabah during their prayers. The opponents of Islam say that there is no difference between Muslims who worship Al-Kabah and the Black Stone and non-Muslims who worship idols. Do Muslims really worship Al-Kabah and the Black Stone or not? It is important to know the history of Al-Kabah and the Black Stone in order to answer this question. Allah ordered Adam to build Al-Kabah to be the first house of Allah in Makkah. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِي بِبَكَّةَ مُبَارَكًا وَهُدًى لِّلْعَالَمِينَ﴾ (آل عمران: 96)

"Indeed, the first House [of worship] established for mankind was that at Makkah - blessed and a guidance for the worlds". [The Qur'an 3:96]

Then Allah ordered Prophet Abraham and his son Ishmael to rebuild Al-Kabah. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَإِذْ يَرْفَعُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ وَإِسْمَاعِيلُ رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ﴾

(البقرة: 127)

"And [mention] when Abraham was raising the foundations of the House and [with him] Ishmael, [saying], "Our Lord, accept [this] from us. Indeed You are the Hearing, the Knowing". [The Qur'an 2:127]

Indeed Al-Kabah was the first house for the believers to worship Allah. Similarly, other mosques (houses of Allah too) have been built for Muslims everywhere to worship Allah. Allah made Al-Kabah a qiblah (direction) of prayer for Muslims everywhere. Therefore, Muslims circle around Al-Kabah and pray either in front of it or far from it to worship Allah. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿فَدَرَى تَقَلُّبَ وَجْهِكَ فِي السَّمَاءِ فَلَنُوَلِّيَنَّكَ قِبْلَةً تَرْضَاهَا فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ

الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ﴾ (البقرة: من الآية 144)

"We have certainly seen the turning of your face, [O Muhammad], toward the heaven, and We will surely turn you to a qiblah (direction) with which you will be pleased. So turn your face toward al-Masjid al-haram (Sacred House). And wherever you [believers] are, turn your faces toward it [in prayer]" . [The Qur'an 2:144]

It is only in Islam that the Oneness of Allah is the first belief a Muslim has to come with during his life in order to be a true believer. In fact, worshipping other deities like idols is the worst sin in Islam. When Muslims circumambulate around Al-Kabah, they utter "La Ilaha Ila Allah" which means "there is no true god worthy of worship but Allah". Dr. Zaker Nike said: *"In olden times, the call to prayer was given by standing on the top of Al-Kabah. If Muslims were idol worshippers, would they stand on top of their 'idol' and call people to*

pray? Does a Hindu or a Christian stand on top of their idols and call others to join in the worship?"

The Black Stone came from Paradise and it is located in one of the corners of Al-Kabah. Allah ordered Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, and Muslims to kiss it when they circle around Al-Kabah. Therefore, it is not worshiped but Muslims kiss it to fulfill the order of Allah. The second Caliph (Omar) after Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, kissed the Black Stone and then said: *"I know that you're a stone which neither benefits nor harms and if I did not see Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, kissing you I would not kiss you."*

Disbelievers will abide in the Hell-fire. Is this Just despite the fact that their disbelief lasted only a short period in this life?

Allah created human beings in the best form and bestowed on them His grace and bounties. A king was asked: "How much do you pay for a drink of water if you could not find water? He said: Half of my kingdom." And then he was asked: "How much do you pay to pass water if you could not? He said: the other half. The king was ready to spend his kingdom on drinking and passing water. What about other bounties of Allah? How much do we pay for them? Allah asks His servants to submit to Him and leave other deities because they neither benefit nor harm anyone except by the will of Allah. However, after the clarification of truth from falsehood human beings insist on keeping astray and doing evil things. Allah gives them the chances many times during their life spans to repent, and warns them against abiding punishment in the Hereafter but they disobey Him until death. The wrongdoers will ask Allah in the Hereafter to bring them back to life to do good deeds but He will reject their request because He knows that if they were brought back to life they would come back to sins even if they would live forever. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿۲۷﴾ وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذْ وَقَفُوا عَلَى النَّارِ فَقَالُوا يَا لَيْتَنَا نُرَدُّ وَلَا نُكَذِّبُ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّنَا وَنَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿۲۷﴾ بَلْ بَدَأَ

لَهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَحْفَظُونَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلَوْ رُدُّوا لَعَادُوا لِمَا هُمْ عَنْهُ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ ﴿۲۸﴾ (الأنعام: 27-28)

"If you could but see when they are made to stand before the Fire and will say, "Oh, would that we could be returned [to life on earth] and not deny the signs of our Lord and be among the

believers."But what they concealed before has [now] appeared to them. And even if they were returned, they would return to that which they were forbidden; and indeed, they are liars". [The Qur'an 6:27-28]

According to legal penalties in many countries of the world a murderer who commits his crime taking only a few seconds spends the rest of his life in prison. Would you condemn this sentence and justify your opinion by saying that it is not just to give this long sentence in prison for the act of few seconds? In fact legislators do not give a sentence according to the time a crime takes but they look at the type of the crime. Allah is more just than human beings and punishes people with justice. He prohibited injustice for His servants and for Himself too. Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said, 'Allah said,' *"O my servants, I have forbidden oppression for Myself and have made it forbidden amongst you, so do not oppress one another."* And His justice exceeds His anger. Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said: *"When Allah decreed the Creation He pledged Himself by writing in His book which is laid down with Him: My mercy prevails over My wrath."* [Narrated by Muslim, Bukhari, an-Nasai, and Ibn Majah]. Allah promised to save from the Hellfire those who have even the weight of an ant of faith. Allah has one hundred mercies. He sent one mercy for human beings and animals to have mercy upon each other in this life and He saved ninety nine mercies for the Day of Judgment to save people from the Hellfire. Indeed He is the All-Merciful. Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said: 'Allah said: *"O son of Adam, were you to come to me with sins nearly as great as the earth and were you then to face me, believing in me, and not associating anybody with Me, I would bring you forgiveness nearly as great as the earth is."* [Narrated by Tirmithi] Therefore, abiding in the Hellfire is only for those who insist to dwell it.

Allah guides His servants to the fundamentals of Islamic creed and righteous deeds that are the way to Paradise. However, no one enters Paradise, including Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), by his righteous deeds, but by Allah's mercy. Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him said: *"No one enters Paradise by his righteous deeds."* They said even you. He said: *"even me except that Allah bestows on me His mercy."* Once a believer is in Paradise by the

mercy of Allah, he gets the level that he deserves for his righteous deeds. Paradise has different levels. The highest level is '*Al-ferdous*' in which Messengers and prophets of Allah and other righteous believers dwell eternally.

O opponents of Islam, when Allah saves from the Hellfire those who have the weight of an ant of faith and takes them to Paradise where they abide in unimaginable happiness, you did not wonder why Allah is the Most Merciful and the Most Generous. You did not wonder because you look at Islam from one angle, the angle of misconceptions.

Misconceptions about the Qur'an

The Qur'an was written in Arabic so how can it be for all mankind who speak different languages?

Allah sent messengers before Muhammad, peace be upon all of them, with scriptures to guide people to the truth. Every messenger confirmed the prophet before him and his scripture. For example, the Prophet Jesus confirmed the Torah of Moses and gave glad tidings of Muhammad to be a messenger after him, peace be upon all of them. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَإِذْ قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ وَمُبَشِّرًا بِرَسُولٍ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِي اسْمُهُ أَحْمَدٌ﴾ (الصف: من الآية 6)

"And [mention] when Jesus, the son of Mary, said, "O children of Israel, indeed I am the messenger of Allah to you confirming what came before me of the Torah and bringing good tidings of a messenger to come after me, whose name is Ahmad". [The Qur'an 61:6]

Similarly, the Qur'an confirmed the Divine Scriptures, the Torah, the Gospel, and others; and Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, and all believers believed in them though they were written in other languages. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿ءَاَمَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلٌّ ءَاَمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْ رُسُلِهِ وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ﴾ (البقرة: 285)

"The Messenger has believed in what was revealed to him from his Lord, and [so have] the believers. All of them have believed in Allah and His angels and His books and His messengers, [saying], "We make no distinction between any of His messengers." And they say, "We hear and we obey. [We seek] Your forgiveness, our Lord, and to You is the [final] destination". [The Qur'an 2:285]

Every Messenger received the revelation in his people's language to understand. Then those who believed conveyed the message to other people with different languages. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا لِيَلْسَنَ قَوْمَهُ لِئَلْبِتَ لَهُمْ﴾ (ابراهيم: من الآية 4)

"And We did not send any messenger except [speaking] in the language of his people to state clearly for them". [The Qur'an 14:4]

If the Qur'an were revealed in another language, the people of Muhammad, peace be upon him, would reject it. Allah said:

﴿قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿٤﴾ وَلَوْ جَعَلْنَاهُ قُرْءَانًا غَرِيبًا لَقَالُوا لَوْلَا فُصِّلَتْ آيَاتُهُ ۖ أَغْرَبِيَ وَعَرَبِيٌّ ﴿فصلت: من الآية 44﴾﴾

"And if We had made it a non-Arabic Qur'an, they would have said, "Why are its verses not explained in detail [in our language]? Is it a foreign [recitation] and an Arab [messenger]?" . [The Qur'an 41:44]

Therefore, Allah revealed the Qur'an in Arabic language to be understood by Arabs first. Allah said:

﴿قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿٣﴾ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاهُ قُرْءَانًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿الزخرف: 3﴾﴾

"Indeed, We have made it an Arabic Qur'an that you might understand". [The Qur'an 43:3]

Then Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, with Arabs who believed conveyed the Qur'an to non-Arabs. Allah said:

﴿قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿٧﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ قُرْءَانًا عَرَبِيًّا لِتُنذِرَ أُمَّ الْقُرَىٰ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا وَتُنذِرَ يَوْمَ الْجَمْعِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ ۗ فَرِيقٌ فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَفَرِيقٌ فِي السَّعِيرِ ﴿الشورى: 7﴾﴾

"And thus We have revealed to you an Arabic Qur'an that you may warn the Mother of Cities [Makkah] and those around it and warn of the Day of Assembly, about which there is no doubt. A party will be in Paradise and a party in the Blaze". [The Qur'an 42:7]

And Allah said:

﴿قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿٦﴾ وَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ هَذَا الْقُرْءَانَ لِتُنذِرَ بِهِ وَمَنْ يَلْعَبْ ﴿الأنعام: من الآية 19﴾﴾

"And this Qur'an was revealed to me that I may warn you thereby and whomever it reaches". [The Qur'an 6:33]

Indeed, the message of the Qur'an reached the East and the West and people interred the religion of Allah in multitudes. Nowadays, there are more than 1.5 billion Muslims of different nationalities who speak many languages, and still Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world.

It is claimed that someone taught Muhammad the Qur'an.

The claim that someone taught Muhammad, peace be upon him, the Qur'an is not valid for the following reasons:

1) The Qur'an was revealed to Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, during 23 years and many of the Prophet's companions lived the revelation of the Qur'an day by day and knew the time and the place of revealed verses. Thus it was impossible for someone to accompany Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, during this long period and teach him the Qur'an without being known.

2) Is it logical for someone to produce such an eloquent book that was admired by people through history and brought a complete way of life for humanity and left such a great thing to someone else? Would it be logical to think that someone produced English literature and gave it to William Shakespeare who is considered the greatest of all English writers? Would any one hand his fame to another one for no reason? Surely, the people of thought would not accept this delusion from any one.

3) Had someone taught Muhammad, peace be upon him, the Qur'an, the infidels of Makkah would have made a great effort to expose him to people to belie Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. In fact, the infidels of Makkah tried to tell people that Wraqah Ibn Nawfal, relative of Muhammad's wife, or a non-Arab person such as Salman the Persian taught Muhammad the Qur'an. They did not succeed because Warqah died shortly after Muhammad became a prophet and Salman met Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, after the major part of the Qur'an was revealed. And how could a non-Arab person produce such an eloquent Arabic book? Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَلَقَدْ نَعَلِمُ أَنَّهُمْ يَقُولُونَ إِنَّمَا يُعَلِّمُهُ بَشَرٌ لِّسَانٌ

الَّذِي يُلْحِدُونَ إِلَيْهِ أَعْجَمِيٌّ وَهَذَا لِسَانٌ عَرَبِيٌّ مُبِينٌ ﴿١٠٣﴾ (النحل:103)

"And We certainly know that they say, "It is only a human being who teaches the Prophet." The tongue of the one they refer to is foreign, and this Qur'an is [in] a clear Arabic language". [The Qur'an 16:103]

In addition, Waraqah and Salman believed in Muhammad as a great messenger and believed in the Qur'an as a holy book from Allah. Then how could a teacher follow his student?

It is claimed that Muhammad peace be upon him wrote the Qur'an from the scriptures of Jews and Christians.

Muhammad was born in 570 A.D. in Makkah, Arabia, where he lived 40 years of his age before the start of revelation. He was a normal person who lived a normal life. He used to be a shepherd during his youth; and when he was 25 years old he worked for Khadijah, a wealthy merchant widow. The noble characters of Muhammad, peace be upon him, attracted Khadijah. She offered to marry him, which Muhammad, peace be upon him, accepted. Muhammad, peace be upon him, was 25 years old and Khadijah was 40 years old at the time of their marriage. He was illiterate with no experience in any form of arts. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿فَلْيَتَأْتِيَهَا النَّاسُ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعًا الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ فَتَأْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ النَّبِيِّ الْأُمِّيِّ الَّذِي يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَكَلِمَاتِهِ
وَاتَّبِعُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ﴾ (الأعراف: 158)

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

Makkah was far from the influence of Jews and Christians and Muhammad, peace be upon him, did not travel to the Christian areas except once when he traveled with his uncle, Abu Taleb, to Al-Sham (Syria and other regions) during his childhood. New Catholic Encyclopedia reported: "*The Hijaz [Arabian Peninsula] had not been touched by Christian preaching. Hence organization of the Christian church was neither to be expected nor found.*" [New Catholic Encyclopedia, Op. Cit., Vol. 1, pp. 721-722]

The first translation of the Old Testament and the New Testament into Arabic was 200 and 1000 years respectively after the death of

Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. Sidney Griffith said: "All one can say about the possibility of a pre-Islamic, Christian version of the Gospel in Arabic is that no sure sign of its actual existence has yet emerged." [The Gospel in Arabic: An Enquiry into Its Appearance in the First Abbasid Century", Oriens Christianus, Volume 69, p. 166]

Ernst Würthwein stated in his book "The Text of the Old Testament": "With the victory of Islam the use of Arabic spread widely, and for Jews and Christians in the conquered lands it became the language of daily life. This gave rise to the need of Arabic versions of the Bible, which need was met by a number of versions mainly independent and concerned primarily for interpretation." [The Text Of The Old Testament, 1988, William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, pp. 104.]

Therefore, how could an illiterate person who lived far away from the regions of Christians and Jews write the Qur'an from their scriptures? Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَمَا كُنْتَ تَتْلُو مِنْ قَبْلِهِ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَلَا تَخُطُّهُ بِيَمِينِكَ إِذًا لِآرْتَابِ الْمُبِطِلُونَ﴾ (العنكبوت: 48)

"And you did not recite before it any scripture, nor did you inscribe one with your right hand. Otherwise the falsifiers would have had [cause for] doubt". [The Qur'an 29:48]

Also Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿قُلْ لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا تَلَوْتُهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا أَدْرَاكُمْ بِهِ فَقَدْ لَبِثْتُ فِيكُمْ عُمُرًا مِنْ قَبْلِهِ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ﴾ (يونس: 16)

Say, "If Allah had willed, I would not have recited it to you, nor would He have made it known to you, for I had remained among you a lifetime before it. Then will you not reason?" [The Qur'an 10:16]

H.A.R. Gibb wrote in his book, Mohammedanism (1953): "well then, if the Koran were his own composition other men could rival it. Let them produce ten verses like it. If they could not (and it is obvious that they could not), then let them accept the Koran as an outstanding evidential miracle."

It is claimed that the Qur'an has contradictions.

The opponents of Islam claimed that some verses of the Qur'an contradict each other and contradict the Sunnah (the statements of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him). Such claim is raised by laymen who do not know pure Arabic and the history of the Qur'an revelation. The Qur'an was revealed during 23 years to bring a way of life for all human beings. It addressed many major aspects of Islam such as Aqeedah (creed, faith, and belief), Islamic laws, acts of worship, history of previous prophets and nations, and manners. There are two types of verses: the precise verses which are the foundation of the book and the unspecific verses. Some verses were abrogated by other verses. The majority of Muslims understand the general messages of the verses whereas Muslim scholars understand not only the message but also rules that can be withdrawn from them and clarify them to their people. Therefore, how can a non-Muslim understand the verses of the Qur'an in detail in order to raise the claim that the Qur'an has contradictions while he does not understand it? How can an incompetent person give a judgment?

The Qur'an was revealed in pure Arabic language. Its eloquence admired the infidels of Makkah who tried with all means to belie the verses of Qur'an. Its eloquence was a miracle for Arabs who were sophisticated in Arabic at that time. Allah challenged mankind and jinn (beings with free will created from fire) to come with a book like the Qur'an, but they could not. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿قُلْ لَئِنِ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ وَلَوْ

كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا ﴿٨٨﴾ (الإسراء: 88)

Say, "If mankind and the jinn gathered in order to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like of it, even if they were to each other assistants". [The Qur'an 17:88]

When they could not produce like the Qur'an, Allah challenged them to bring ten chapters like it, but they could not. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَيْنَاهُ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِعَشْرِ سُوْرٍ مِثْلِهِ مُفْتَرِيْنَ وَأَدْعُوا مَنِ اسْتَفْتَعْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِ

اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٣﴾ (هود: 13)

Or do they say, "He invented it"? Say, "Then bring ten chapters like it that have been invented and call upon [for assistance] whomever you can besides Allah, if you should be truthful". [The Qur'an 11:13]

When they could not produce like ten chapters of it, Allah challenged them to bring one chapter like it, but they could not. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿۳۸﴾ أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَيْنَاهُ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِسُورٍ مِّثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا مَنِ اسْتَضَعْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

﴿۳۸﴾ (يونس: 38)

Or do they say [about the Prophet], "He invented it?" Say, "Then bring forth a chapter like it and call upon [for assistance] whomever you can besides Allah, if you should be truthful". [The Qur'an 10:38]

Allah made it clear to all mankind that it is impossible for anyone to produce like the Qur'an. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿۳۷﴾ وَمَا كَانَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ أَنْ يُفْتَرَى مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنْ نَصَدِيقَ الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَتَفْصِيلَ

الْكِتَابِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ مِنْ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿۳۷﴾ (يونس: 37)

"And it was not [possible] for this Qur'an to be produced by other than Allah , but [it is] a confirmation of what was before it and a detailed explanation of the [former] Scripture, about which there is no doubt, from the Lord of the worlds". [The Qur'an 10:37]

The infidels of Makkah who lived the revelation of the Qur'an raised many accusations against Islam and Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, but they did not dare to raise accusations against the eloquence and integrity of the Qur'an except to say it is a type of magic. Once Al-Waleed ibn Al-Mugheerah passed by Prophet Muhammad while he was reciting verses of the Qur'an. Al-Waleed was highly affected by the recitation. When the people of Makkah heard about this event, Abu Jahl (the enemy of Islam) rushed to Al-Waleed and asked him to say bad things about what he heard from Muhammad to stop people from converting to Islam. Then Al-Waleed said: *"And what can I say? For I swear by Allah, there is none amongst you who knows poetry as well as I do, nor can any compete with me in composition or rhetoric-not even in the poetry of the jinns!*

And yet, I swear by Allah, Muhammad's speech (meaning the Qur'an) does not bear any similarity to anything I know and I swear by Allah, the speech that he says is very sweet, and is adorned with beauty and charm. Its first part is fruitful and its last part is abundant (meaning that it is full of deep meaning) and it conquers (all other speech) and remains unconquered! It shatters and destroys all that has come before it (because of its eloquence). However, in response to the insistence of Abu Jahl, Alwaleed found nothing except to say that the Qur'an is a type of magic. [Ibn Hishaam, Biography of Prophet Muhammad, p. 225] Had the Qur'an contained contradictions, Al-Waleed and others would have raised them to belie it.

The Qur'an is the pure word of Allah thus it is fully authentic. The Qur'an exists in its original Arabic text. It was written down at the time of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, and transmitted everywhere in the most reliable ways. There have been no disputes among Muslims about the authenticity and integrity of the Qur'an. Hundreds of Muslims during the time of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, and thousands of Muslims during the Islamic history memorized the Qur'an by hearts. Allah promised to protect and guard the Qur'an so no change even in a single word or a single letter took place. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ﴾ (الحجر: 9)

"Indeed, it is We who sent down the Qur'an and indeed, We will be its guardian". [The Qur'an 15:9]

Sir William Muir wrote in his book, The Life of Muhammad: "There is probably in the world no other book which has remained twelve centuries with so pure a text." After another two centuries from Sir William Muir the Qur'an remains a pure text. Therefore, had someone produced the Qur'an other than Allah or made changes into it, it would have contained contradictions. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ الْفُرْقَةَ أَنْ لَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا﴾ (النساء: 82)

"Then do they not reflect upon the Qur'an? If it had been from [any] other than Allah, they would have found within it much contradiction". [The Qur'an 4:82]

Misconceptions about the Prophet Muhammad

The claim that Prophet Muhammad was the founder of Islam and Muslims worship him

Islam means total submission to Allah (God) in all aspects of life with no objection. Islam was not named after Muhammad as Christianity, which was named after Jesus Christ, Buddhism after the Buddha; nor was it named after the tribes of Arabs as Judaism after the tribe of Judah, and Hinduism after the Hindus. Islam is the universal religion for all mankind from Adam until the Day of Judgment.

All prophets of Allah came to call people to Islam (to submit to Allah who created them). Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said: *“The Prophets are brothers and their religion is one.”* Also all prophets admitted that they are Muslims because they had full submission to Allah. The Qur’an stressed the prophets’ submission to Allah in many places of the Qur’an (2:132, 2:133 and 3:52).

Therefore, Islam is not a new religion brought by Muhammad, peace be upon him, only to Arabs; rather it is the true religion of Allah for all mankind from Adam until the end of this world re-expressed in its final form through the message of the Qur’an and the prophethood of Muhammad, peace be upon him.

The claim that Muslims worship Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, is absolutely false because it is well-known that Muslims worship non but Allah and no need to debate it. It is adequate to say that the Qur’an, the Sunnah, the Islamic history and the practice of Muslims tell us that no one has worshiped Muhammad.

The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, had nine wives

The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, had nine wives while Muslims are allowed to have up to only four wives. Opponents of Islam claimed that Muhammad wanted to fulfill his sexual desire with these wives because he was a lustful man.

Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, came to convey the message from Allah. He had to follow the orders from Allah. Allah prescribed for Muslim men to marry up to four women while He allowed His messenger to marry more than four. He married Kadijah,

the first wife, before he became a prophet. She was fifteen years older than him and he did not marry another woman during her life for twenty five years. Then after her death, he married other women for the following reasons:

-He married Aishah, the daughter of Abu Bakr; and married Hafsa, the daughter of Omar, to honor their parents, the best of his companions.

-He married Um Salamah, Zinab daughter of Khuzimah, and Saudah, daughter of Zumah, after the death of their husbands to honor them for their sacrifice for the sake of Allah and to protect them and their children.

-He married Safiah, daughter of Huyey Ibn Akhtab, (Jew) who saw in a dream that the full moon fell onto her; and when she told her uncle about the dream, he slammed her and he said, "Do you want to marry the prophet of Arabs". The Prophet, peace be upon him, married her after the battle of Khaiber between Muslims and Jews in which her husband, father, brother, and uncle were killed.

-He married Um Habibah (Ramlah daughter of Abi Sufian) after her husband became a Christian in Abyssinia. It was impossible to go back to her father because he was the leader of Quraish and the enemy of Islam. Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, married her to honor and protect her.

-He married Juiriah, daughter of Al-Hareth, after the battle of Bani Al-Mustaleq to Honor her father who became a Muslim after he came with a herd of camels as a ransom to free his daughter (Juiriah); who was captured during the battle of Bani Al-Mustaliq between Muslims and her tribe. He liked two camels so he decided to hide them and when he reached Al-Madinah, the Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him asked him, " *Where are the two camels that you have hidden in Al-agig?* He wondered and said, "No one knew the place where I hide them." Then He said, "I bear witness that there is no true god but Allah and you are the Messenger of Allah". The man knew that it is Allah Who informed the Prophet about the place where he hid the two camels, thus he was a true messenger of Allah.

-He married Zainab, daughter of Jahsh, by order from Allah after she was divorced from her husband (Zaid Ibn Haretha), the Prophet's adopted son, in order to abolish adoption. The adopted son was

considered like the actual son, thus it was prohibited for someone to marry his adopted son's wife after divorcing her.

According to the marriage history of the Prophet we cannot say that he married for sexual desire but for noble purposes. If he was a lustful person, he would not have married his first wife who was fifteen years older than him but he would have married a young woman or at least he would have married other young women beside her during the twenty five years marriage. In fact, he married only one virgin woman, Aishah, during his life. Also if he was a lustful person, he would not have married divorced women older than him.

Veccia Vaglieri, a famous Italian orientalist, said in her book "In Defense of Islam": *"Throughout the years of his youth, Muhammad only married one woman, even though the sexuality of man is at its peak during this period. Although he lived in the society he lived in, wherein plural marriage was considered the general rule, and divorce was very easy – he only married one woman, although she was older than him. He was a faithful husband to her for twenty-five years, and did not marry another woman, except after her death. He at that time was fifty years old. He married each of his wives thereafter for a social or political purpose; such that he wanted to honor the pious women, or wanted the loyalty of certain tribes so that Islam would spread amongst them. All the wives Muhammad married were not virgin, nor were they young or beautiful; except for A'ishah. So how can anyone claim that he was a lustful man? He was a man not a god. His wish to have a son may have also led him to marry; for the children that he had from Khadeejah all died. Moreover, he undertook the financial responsibilities of his large family, without having large resources. He was just and fair towards them all and did not differentiate between them at all. He followed the practice of previous Prophets such as Moses, whom no one objected to their plural marriage. Is the reason why people object to the plural marriage of Muhammad the fact that we know the minute details of his life, and know so little of the details of the lives of the Prophets before him?"*

Finally, prophets before Prophet Muhammad such as Moses, David and Salomon, peace be upon all of them, practiced plural marriage (Kings 9:16, 11:3 and 2 Chron. 11:21). This confirms that it is a divine law.

Prophet Muhammad married a six-year-old girl while he was fifty years old.

The opponents of Islam claimed that this is not a human act? Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, married Aishah, the daughter of Abu Bakr, while she was six years old but the actual marriage started when she was nine years old. It is scientifically accepted that a nine-year-old woman can be mature, especially in hot areas like Makkah where Aishah had grown up. In addition, early marriage from young girls was accepted at that time otherwise disbelievers would have condemned it to defame Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, and Islam. Allah honored her to be the wife of the greatest Prophet. She was very happy with this marriage and she never complained.

The wisdom behind this early marriage is that she conveyed to Muslims many acts of worship and religious matters related to women that were impossible for any person to get from Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. She dedicated herself for the religion during the forty seven years after the death of the Prophet, peace be upon him. She was ranked number three among the Prophet's companions in reporting the Sunnah after Abu Hurairah and Abdullah Ibn Omar. The Prophet, peace be upon him, advised his companions to get religious knowledge from her. In fact, this early marriage helped Aishah to spend adequate time with the Prophet to gain knowledge of Islam and the long life that she lived after the Prophet helped her to convey this knowledge to Muslims. May Allah put blessing upon her.

Some non-Muslims believe that Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, is the prophet of Arabs only.

Allah the Almighty sent Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, with guidance and mercy to all mankind. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا كَافَّةً لِّلنَّاسِ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾

(سبأ: 28) 

"And We have not sent you except comprehensively to mankind as a bringer of good tidings and a warner. But most of the people do not know". [The Qur'an 34:28]

Also Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴾ (الأنبياء: 107)

"And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to the worlds". [The Qur'an 21:107]

In fact, Arabs comprise only 18% of total Muslim population. In another word, the majority of Muslims (82%) are non-Arabs. Also not all Arabs are Muslims. However, Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, started in his invitation to Islam with his tribe (the people of Makkah) then he invited tribes of Arabs then he invited non-Arabs. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿ وَهَذَا كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مُبَارَكٌ مُّصَدِّقٌ لِّلَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَلِنُنذِرَ أُمَّ الْقُرَىٰ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا ﴾ (الأنعام: من الآية 92)

"And this is a Book which We have sent down, blessed and confirming what was before it, that you may warn the Mother of Cities (Makkah) and those around it". [The Qur'an 42:7]

After All Arabia became under the rule of Islamic State and the leadership of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, he sent letters to emperors and kings of Rome, Persia, and Egypt to invite them to Islam. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿ قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعًا ﴾ (الأعراف: من الآية 158)

Say, [O Muhammad], "O mankind, indeed I am the Messenger of Allah to you all". [The Qur'an 7:158]

Then Islam spread to the whole world thus Muslims are found everywhere. Nowadays, Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world [Encyclopedia Britannica]

Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, was the last messenger who came with Islam confirming the divine messages before it and as a criterion over all religions. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿ هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ، بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظَاهِرَهُ، عَلَىٰ الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ، وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا ﴾ (الفتح: 28)

"It is He who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to manifest it over all religion. And sufficient is Allah as Witness". [The Qur'an 48:28]

All Prophets of Allah came to call people to Islam (to submit to Allah Who created them). The prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him said: *"The prophets are brothers and their religion is one."* Also all Prophets admitted that they are Muslims because they had full submission to Allah. The Qur'an stressed the Prophet's submission to Allah in many chapters such as 2:132-133 and 3:52. Therefore, Islam is not a new religion brought by Muhammad, peace be upon him, to Arabs only; rather it is the true religion of Allah for all mankind from Adam until the end of this world re-expressed in its final form through the message of the Qur'an and the prophethood of Muhammad, peace be upon him. Therefore, those who seek religions other than Islam will be the losers in the Hereafter. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿ وَمَنْ يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴾ (آل عمران: 85)

"And whoever desires other than Islam as religion - never will it be accepted from him, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers." [The Qur'an 3:85]

Also Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said: *"I swear by Allah that whoever hears about me from among either Jews or Christians and does not believe in me will enter the Fire"*

Christians claim that Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, committed sins while Jesus did not. Thus Jesus is better than Muhammad and Muslims reject Jesus.

Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿ فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ لِدُنْيَاكَ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مُتَقَلَّبَكُمْ وَمَثَلَكُمْ ﴾ (محمد: 19)

"So know, [O Muhammad], that there is no deity except Allah and ask forgiveness for your sin and for the believing men and believing women. And Allah knows of your movement and your resting place." [The Qur'an 47:19]

This verse and similar verses indicate that Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, sinned. This confirms with no doubt that the Qur'an is a revelation from Allah because if Muhammad wrote the Qur'an, he would not have described himself as a sinful person. Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, was a human being whom Allah the Almighty chose to convey His message to people. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَا إِلَهُمُ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ﴾ (الكهف: من الآية 110)

Say, "I am only a man like you, to whom has been revealed that your God is one God". [The Qur'an 18:110]

Allah could raise him with no sin but He made this impossible for any human being including the prophets and messengers of Allah, peace be upon all of them. No human being is without sins, including Jesus, peace be upon him. Jesus Christ repented when he was baptized by John the Baptist as Matthew 3:13 reported: "Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John." But the prophets and messengers had minor sins and mistakes. This is by the will of Allah to teach people that He chose from among them human prophets and messengers to carry His message and to be followed but not to be taken as deities besides Him. The claim of Christians that Jesus was free of sins and mistakes led them to believe in him as a divine person thus he has been worshiped besides Allah.

However, prophets and messengers, including Muhammad, peace be upon all of them, were protected against any sin or mistake related to the revelation and morals. Allah purified them to convey His message to people as pure as they received it from Him. When any one of them made a mistake in religious matters, Allah informed him about it immediately and guided him to the truth. It is He Who affirmed His Prophet, Muhammad, peace be upon him, with the truth. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَلَوْلَا أَن تَبَيَّنَّاكَ لَفَتَرَكْتَ تَرَكَّنُ إِلَيْهِمْ شَيْئًا قَلِيلًا﴾ (الإسراء: 74)

"And if We had not strengthened you (O Muhammad), you would have almost inclined to them a little". [The Qur'an 17:74]

Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, spoke not about his desires but it was revelation from Allah. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ۗ ۝٣ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ﴾ (النجم: 3-4)

"and he (Muhammad) spoke not from [his own] inclination. It is not but a revelation revealed". [The Qur'an 53:3-4]

The claim that Muslims reject Jesus is absolutely false because Muslims believe that Prophet Jesus, peace be upon him, was a beloved prophet who conveyed the revelation from Allah to his people sincerely. He taught them to worship none but Allah. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَإِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يٰعِيسَىٰ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ ءَأَنْتَ قُلْتَ لِلنَّاسِ اتَّخِذُونِي وَأُمَّيَّ إِلَهَيْنِ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قَالِ سُبْحٰنَكَ مَا يَكُونُ لِي أَنْ أَقُولَ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِحَقِّ إِنْ كُنْتَ قُلْتُهُ فَقَدْ عَلِمْتَهُ. تَعَلَّمَ مَا فِي نَفْسِي وَلَا أَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِكَ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ عَلَّمُ الْعُيُوبِ﴾ (المائدة: 116-117 - من الآية 117)

"And [beware the Day] when Allah will say, "O Jesus, Son of Mary, did you say to the people, 'Take me and my mother as deities besides Allah ?'" He will say, "Exalted are You! It was not for me to say that to which I have no right. If I had said it, You would have known it. You know what is within myself, and I do not know what is within Yourself. Indeed, it is You who is Knower of the unseen. I said not to them except what You commanded me - to worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord". [The Qur'an 5:116-117]

The Bible in Mark 12/28-32 reported that one of the teachers of law asked Jesus "of all the commandments, which is the most important?" The most important one, answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel the Lord our God, the Lord is one...well said, teacher, the man replied. "You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him." And Jesus in John 17:3 said: "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and (to know) Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." In fact, Jesus Christ did not ask his followers to worship him but to worship Allah alone and to love Him and to fear Him as it is reported in Matthew 4:10 "Away from me Satan for it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.'"

Muslims do not differentiate between the messengers of Allah. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿عَٰمَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلٌّ ءَٰمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ

وَرُسُلِهِ ۖ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْ رُسُلِهِ ۚ وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا ۚ غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ
(البقرة: 285)

"The Messenger has believed in what was revealed to him from his Lord, and [so have] the believers. All of them have believed in Allah and His angels and His books and His messengers, [saying], 'We make no distinction between any of His messengers.' And they say, 'We hear and we obey. [We seek] Your forgiveness, our Lord, and to You is the [final] destination.'" [The Qur'an 2:285]

Therefore, Muhammad and Jesus, peace be upon them, are both beloved messengers of Allah.

Some disbelievers claimed that Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, had Epileptic Seizures

The opponents of Islam accused Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, with epilepsy to describe his condition at the time of receiving the revelation, the Qur'an. The major epilepsy types are grand mal, petit mal, and psychomotor. The diagnoses of these epilepsy types are:

- Sudden unconsciousness with falling and shaking of the limbs.
- Jerky moves followed by stiffening and halted respiration.
- No remembrance of what happened.
- Momentary lapses of awareness.
- Convulsions, screams, and mumbles with no clear words and sentences.

We compare the above symptoms to the real conditions of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, at the time of receiving the revelation:

- He had full control of movement and intellect without unconsciousness.
- He recited the verses of the Qur'an without forgetting any word.
- He received the Qur'an with the highest eloquence.
- He answered questions during the time of receiving the revelation.
- He received verses that describe the history of the previous prophets with their nations, and some future events that took place exactly as he

described, and many scientific facts that are in full harmony with the recent scientific findings.

After this comparison, it is clear that the opponents of Islam have no evidence to claim that Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, had epilepsy. The aim of their misconception is to defame Islam through distorting the personality of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. Some orientalist of non-Muslims rejected this claim strongly such as John Davenport who said: *"This remark that Muhammad has suffered the attacks of epilepsy is one of the false, awkward sayings of the Greeks by which they meant to stain the prestige of the propagator of a new religion, and turn the world of Christianity against his moral behavior and qualities."* [Udhri Taqsir, p.20]

The misconceptions of the opponents of Islam today are similar to those of the opponents of Islam at the time of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. Surely, the disbelief way is one. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿ وَيَقُولُونَ إِنَّمَا لَتَارِكُوا إِلَهَيْنَا لِشَاعِرٍ مَجْنُونٍ ﴾ (الصافات: 36)

And [they] were saying, "Are we to leave our gods for a mad poet?" . [The Qur'an 37:36]

And He said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿ إِنَّ هُوَ إِلَّا رَجُلٌ بِهِ جِنَّةٌ فَمَا يُصَوِّبُ بِهِ حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ ﴾ (المؤمنون: 25)

"He is not but a man possessed with madness, so wait concerning him for a time". [The Qur'an 23:25]

Also the disbelievers accused their prophets and messengers before Muhammad, peace be upon all of them. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿ كَذَلِكَ مَا أَتَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا قَالُوا سَاحِرٌ أَوْ مَجْنُونٌ ﴾ (الذريات: 52)

"Similarly, there came not to those before them any messenger except that they said, "A magician or a madman". [The Qur'an 51:52]

Then Allah told them about Muhammad, peace be upon him, that he is not a madman but a messenger from Him. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿ قُلْ إِنَّمَا أُعْطِيَكُمْ يُوحَىٰ أَنْ تَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ مِثْلَ خِيَلٍ مُنْقَضَةٍ فَمَا تُدْرِكُونَ ﴾ (سج: 46)

بصاحبكم من جنّة إن هو إلا نذير لكم بين يدي عذاب شديد ﴿ (سج: 46)

Say, "I only advise you of one [thing] - that you stand for Allah, [seeking truth] in pairs and individually, and then give thought." There is not in your companion any madness. He is only a warner to you before a severe punishment". [The Qur'an 34:46]

Finally, an intellectual person never thinks that Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, had epilepsy. It is ridiculous to think that the person who brought a sophisticated complete system (Islam) which dominated the whole world for more than one thousand years had epilepsy. Do not they see? Or they see but they have blinded hearts. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى الْأَبْصَارُ وَلَكِنْ تَعْمَى الْقُلُوبَ الَّتِي فِي الصُّدُورِ﴾ (الحج: من الآية 46)

"For indeed, it is not eyes that are blinded, but blinded are the hearts which are within the breasts." [The Qur'an 22:46]

Misconceptions about Woman in Islam

Polygamy in Islam

Islam allows a man to marry more than one wife up to four. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿فَأَنْكِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مَثْنَى وَثُلَاثَ وَرُبْعًا﴾ (النساء: من الآية 3)

"Then marry those that please you of [other] women, two or three or four". [The Qur'an 4:3]

This is considered by the opponents of Islam a type of oppression against woman. We are going to clarify the wisdom behind polygamy from different perspectives.

1) Polygamy through history

Polygamy has been practiced by previous nations through history before Islam. Arabs, Persians, Russians, Germans, Egyptians, Japanese, and Hindus practiced polygamy with no limit. All religions before Islam accepted polygamy. For example, the Bible and early Christians addressed polygamy as a legal practice and did not forbid it. The Bible tells that great Prophets and others such as Abraham, David, Jacob, Salomon and his son had more than one wife [Kings 9:16, 11:3 and 2 Chron. 11:21]. The Bible obligated all judges to have several wives [Judges 8:30, 10:45, and 12:14]. The prohibition of polygamy in Christianity did not come from the divine scriptures or from the teaching of Jesus and early Christians but from the Christian church. Despite the prohibition of the church, priests in the church gave the permission for some individuals to have a second wife such as Irish king, Ditharmet [Western Mark, History of Marriage], and King Frederick the second. The founder of Protestant sect, Martin Luther, addressed polygamy as an acceptable practice in Christianity and he advocated it [Abbas M. Al-Akkad, Woman in the Glorious Qur'an]

2) Why polygamy in Islam?

Polygamy is a divine law prescribed by Allah the All-Wise. Allah knows what benefits His servants, so what He prescribed is essential for them. The real believers submit to the orders of Allah with full satisfaction and with no objection. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا مُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَى اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ وَمَنْ

يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا مُّبِينًا ﴿٣٦﴾ (الأحزاب: 36)

"It is not for a believing man or a believing woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decided a matter, that they should [thereafter] have any choice about their affair. And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger has certainly strayed into clear error". [The Qur'an 23:36]

The wisdom of polygamy in Islam can be summarized in the following:

-The population of females is greater than that of males. This is because the birth rate of females is higher than that of males in the world, and men have higher death rate than women due to wars and hard jobs which are normally achieved by men. If we assume that a man marries one woman, tens of millions of women will stay without marriage in the world. Is this fair? Jawid, the well known English scholar, said: *"The stiff British system which prevents polygamy is an unfair and unacceptable system. It severely hurts approximately two million women (in Britain) who have become old maids. These women have lost their youth and were deprived from having children. Thus, these women were forced to throw away the moral values as one throws the pit of the date."* [Ahmad Abdul Aziz Al-Husseini, Woman and her Position in Islam]

-Islam came to put a limit to the unlimited polygamy which was practiced before Islam. Islam allows man to marry up to four women and those who marry more than four wives can keep four of them and must divorce the extra wives.

-Polygamy is a means for those poor widows who have children to get financial support and protection for them and for their children.

-Some wives are sterile to give birth or they have chronic illnesses and can not fulfill the needs of their husbands, especially sexual desire. The husband can marry another woman thus the ill wife stays with him and gets support and protection.

3) Conditions for polygamy in Islam

Islam put certain conditions to have more than one wife to ensure the right of every wife. The first condition is justice and equality in material things. The husband should treat his wives justly and equally in spending money, time, and other worldly things. Unjust treatment against any wife is a sin. Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said: *"He who has two wives and does not demonstrate justice, fairness and equality amongst them will come on the Day of Resurrection with one of his sides paralyzed."* [Narrated by Tirmitheh] The husband has no control on his heart and emotions so if he inclines emotionally towards one of his wives he is not blamed as long as this inclination does not lead to unequal distribution among the wives. Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said: *"O Allah this is the fair way of dividing what I possess amongst my wives. O Allah! Blame me not for what You alone possess while I do not."* [Narrated by Tirmitheh, Abu Dawood, Al-Nasaiee, and Ibn Majah]

Allah allowed the believers to marry up to four but with the condition that they fulfill justice amongst them and instructed them to marry only one if they fear that they will not be just. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿فَانكِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مَثْنٍ وَثُلَاثَ وَرُبْعَ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا فَوَاحِدَةً﴾ (النساء: 3)

"then marry those that please you of [other] women, two or three or four. But if you fear that you will not be just, then [marry only] one" [The Qur'an 4:3]

The second condition is affording another household. It is essential for a man to have the ability to afford another household before thinking of marrying another woman. Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him said: *"O young people if any one of you afforded household then he should marry"* Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, encouraged the youth who are not married to get married but he put upon them the condition that they can afford household otherwise they should not. If the condition of affording household in the case of unmarried youth is important it is more important in the case of married men.

When a man marries another woman while he knows that he can not afford the household needs, he is entitled to the warning of

Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, who said: *"It is enough for a man to be sinful to neglect his responsibility towards his family."*

Due to the conditions of polygamy in Islam few Muslims practice it yet it is enough to please the extra number of women in the society and at the same time to fulfill the need of those men for an additional wife. Usually, the second marriage affects the first wife who feels jealous from the second wife, but Islam deals with social issues from different angles and takes into considerations the major benefits towards all society even if this is at the expense of some individuals. At the same time Islam demands from its individuals to be patient for the sake of Allah with the divine laws which Allah prescribed and Allah promised them with blessing in this life and with big rewards in Paradise in the Hereafter. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿إِنَّمَا كَانَ قَوْلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذَا دُعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ أَنْ يَقُولُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا

وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ (النور: 51)

"The only statement of the [true] believers when they are called to Allah and His Messenger to judge between them is that they say, "We hear and we obey." And those are the successful". [The Qur'an 24:51]

4) Polygamy in modern societies

Modern societies practice polygamy through illegal ways such as girlfriends, sweethearts, mistresses, escort services, wife swapping, etc. These relationships are practiced by both single and married people. The purpose of illegal polygamy in modern societies is to fulfill sexual desire without taking the responsibility of household. As a matter of fact a lot of men in the West do not like legal marriage because they do not want to have obligations, especially financial obligation. Also males have been clinically proven to have more sexual desire than females and legal monogamy restricts their natural desire. Therefore, the cheap way for their sexual interest is illegal love affairs. The result of such relationship between men and women is disastrous and the victims of it are illegitimate children, women, and all society.

Illegitimate children who are born out of wedlock find no fathers to take care of them so the responsibility goes to the mothers or to the society. The number of illegitimate children exceeds 50% of total children in many countries of the world. The United Nations considered the high number of illegitimate children in the world a major problem and disease. It published a publication in 1995 about this problem and the editor said: *"Islamic countries are protected against such social problems and disease due to the fact that the people practice polygamy."* [Waheed-ud Deen Khan, Islam Challenges] Gustave Le Bond, the well-known French thinker, said in his book Arab Civilization: *"Polygamy reduces the society social crisis, prevents the mistresses' problem and cures the society from illegitimate children."* [Abdul-Rahman Al-Sheha, Women In the Shade of Islam]

Another problem of illegal polygamy in the world is the spread of different sexual diseases such as A.I.D.S and herpes. However, this problem is not associated with polygamy in Islam because husbands have legal and social commitments and obligations towards their wives and they do not search for new women every time for their satisfaction as it happens in the illegal polygamy.

Muslim women inheritance

Muslim women have got their legal rights since the advent of Islam fourteen centuries ago while women in the West had to wait until recent centuries to get their legal rights. Arabs before Islam used to deprive women of many legal rights. Pagan Arabs used not to give women inheritance shares. Islam came to stop this unfair treatment toward women. Women in Islam have legal rights like men but with some differences. The Qur'an stresses the equality of right for men and women. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ﴾ (البقرة: من الآية 228)

"And due to them (wives) is similar to what is expected of them, according to what is reasonable" . [The Qur'an 2:228]

The Qur'an confirms the right of both men and women to get inheritance shares. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿لِّلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا

تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ مِمَّا قَلَّ مِنْهُ أَوْ كَثُرَ نَصِيبًا مَّفْرُوضًا ﴿٧﴾ (النساء: 7)

"For men is a share of what the parents and close relatives leave, and for women is a share of what the parents and close relatives leave, be it little or much- an obligatory share". [The Qur'an 4:7]

So mothers, daughters, and wives get inheritance shares. A male gets a portion equal to that of two women. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿يُوصِيكُمُ اللَّهُ فِي أَوْلَادِكُمْ لِلذَّكَرِ مِثْلُ حَظِّ الْأُنثَيَيْنِ ﴿١١﴾ (النساء: من الآية 11)

"Allah instructs you concerning your children: for the male, what is equal to the share of two females". [The Qur'an 4:11]

This can be seen as unjust treatment toward women. But when we know the responsibility of a husband in a Muslim family, we will realize that this distribution is just. A husband must provide his family with all sustenance and protection. His wife has no obligation to provide the family with financial support. So what she gets from the inheritance is her own but she willingly can help her husband and she gets reward from Allah. Before marriage, Islam obliges fathers to provide their daughters with sustenance and protection as part of the household. Now we understand that a man spends his share in supporting his family including his wife while a woman keeps her share for herself and she has full control over her property. She can sell, buy, and make contracts with others without seeking permission from her husband or any one. Also, she gets dowry before marriage from her husband and after his death she gets inheritance share from his estate.

Unlike Islamic law, the Bible, Numbers: 27:1-11, stated that a daughter gets her father's inheritance only if he has no son. If he has no daughter, his inheritance goes to his male relatives and no mention about his female relatives, including his mother and his wife. While a husband gets a share from his wife's estate, she does not get a share from her husband's estate. Also a father gets a share while a mother does not. Also women in Europe and America used not to have property rights until late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For example the English law published in 1632 stated: *"That which the husband hath is his own. That which the wife hath is the husband's."*

Consequently, female orphans and widows may live in a desperate condition or they should wait for the mercy of their relatives or other people.

Non-Islamic systems do not oblige husbands of all household needs. Wives have to share in the household spending from their inheritance or they have to work to earn for household spending. Also fathers do not have to provide their adult daughters with financial support. Therefore, non-Islamic systems divide the inheritance equally between male and female heirs. Is it fair to oblige wives to participate in the household spending as husbands? No. We know that most household activities are done by the wife such as pregnancy, child nursing, taking care of children, etc. Therefore, equal share of the inheritance for women is not enough and unfair because in addition to the required equal spending on household needs they have more jobs at home than husbands. In his book "Arab Civilization", Gustave Le Bond said: *"The principles of inheritance which have been determined in the Glorious Quran have a great deal of justice and fairness. The person who reads the Glorious Quran can perceive these concepts of justice and fairness in terms of inheritance through the verses I quoted. I should also point out the great level of efficiency in terms of general laws and rules derived from these verses. I have compared British, French, and Islamic Laws of inheritance and found that Islam grants the wives, who are considered by Westerners to be ill-treated and that Muslims are not fair in treating their wives (and women in general), inheritance rights that are lacking in our laws."*

Muslim Woman's Dress Code

Muslim women's dress code, veil, is considered by the opponents of Islam as a great sign of women's oppression. But they do not know why Allah proscribed veil on women. Islam has many disciplines to purify the Muslim society from fornication and adultery. For example the Qur'an states:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَى جُيُوبِهِنَّ﴾ (النور: من الآية 31)

"And tell the believing women to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things) and protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts) and not to show off their adornment except what must (ordinarily) appear thereof, that they should draw their veils all over their chests". [The Qur'an 24:31]

Veil is a way toward purification in the Muslim society because it closes roads leading to fornication and adultery. Showing woman's beauty can arouse sexual desire in men and lead to sexual harassment or rape. So Allah ordained Muslim women to wear veil for their protection. The Qur'an states:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لَأَزْوَاجِكَ وَبَنَاتِكَ وَنِسَاءَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يُدْنِينَكَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلْبَابِهِنَّ ذَلِكَ آدَبٌ

أَنْ يُعْرَفْنَ فَلَا يُؤْذَنَنَّ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿٥٩﴾ (الأحزاب: 59)

"O Prophet, tell your wives and your daughters, and the women of the believers to bring down over themselves (part) of their outer garments. That is more suitable that they will be known and not be abused. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful". [The Qur'an 33:59]

Some reports indicate that sexual harassment and rape is increasing in the western society. A survey conducted by the Federal Government in USA found a rape crime committed every six minutes on women. The motivation of such crimes is the attractive beauty of women and showing off their bodies. Also veil protects families from collapse because when a woman shows her beauty, it excites men's sexual feeling. Consequently, husbands who married from less beautiful women become not satisfied with their wives.

Veil is a law in other religions. For example the Bible stated that a woman should cover her head. The woman who does not cover her head should have her hair cut off. The Bible said, *"If a woman does not cover her head, she should have her hair cut off; and if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut or shaved off, she should cover her head"*. [Corinthians 11:6] According to the Bible woman was created for man and she is the glory of man thus she should cover her head to show the authority of man over her. The Bible says: *"A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man. For man did not come from*

woman, but woman from man; neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. For this reason, and because of the angels, the woman ought to have sign of authority on her head." [Corinthians 11:7-10] Sherif Abdel Azeem said in his book "Women in Islam": *"It is one of the great ironies of our world today that the very same headscarf revered as a sign of 'holiness' when worn for the purpose of showing the authority of man by Catholic Nuns, is revered as a sign of 'oppression' when worn for the purpose of protection by Muslim women."*

Some non-Muslim women thought at the beginning that veil is a sign of woman oppression in Muslim society. This thinking was an obstacle in their way to Islam. But after they understood Islam, they found the modesty, purity, chastity, righteousness, and honor in Islamic veil. For example before a woman embraced Islam, she said: *"In the beginning, when my sister Khadija invited me to Islam, the main obstacle on my path to light was not the sacrifices I would have to make in my eating, drinking, and conduct. The one felled-tree in my path to guidance and righteousness was the fact that I would have to go around looking like her (wearing veil). After embracing Islam she said: "I freed and liberated myself from self-imposed bondage. It is funny that I found such freedom in the thing that was keeping me from Islam in the first place; the Hejab (veil)."*

Finally, veil is a sign of obedience to Allah and a manifestation of faith that Muslim women should observe to satisfy their Lord in order to get His mercy and His Paradise in the hereafter.

Islam does not allow the free mixing of men with women except in public places. Also it prohibits a man and woman to be alone together in a private place. This is another way besides veil to purify Muslim society from fornication and adultery. Islam does not confine women at home but it is the righteous women who listen to the word of Allah and stay at home except for necessity. If it is necessary, Muslim women can work outside their houses but modesty and chastity should shield them.

Two-woman witnesses

The Qur'an requires two men witnesses or a man and two women in financial transactions. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَأَسْتَشْهِدُوا شَهِيدَيْنِ مِنْ رِجَالِكُمْ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُونَا رَجُلَيْنِ فَرَجُلٌ وَامْرَأَتَانِ مِمَّن رَضَوْنَ مِنَ الشَّهَادَةِ أَنْ تَضِلَّ إِحْدَاهُمَا فَتُذَكَّرَ إِحْدَاهُمَا الْأُخْرَى﴾ (البقرة: من الآية 282)

"And bring to witness two witnesses from among your men. And if there are not two men [available], then a man and two women from those whom you accept as witnesses so that if one of the women errs then the other can remind her." [The Qur'an 2:282]

The opponents of Islam look at this negatively and they think that Islam undermines woman intellectual integrity. Why two women and not one? Allah Almighty prescribed this testimony because he knows that one woman besides one man is not enough to prove or disprove the right of opponents in such a serious matter. The believers submit to the divine law with no objection but the disbelievers need clarification. First, giving a witness is a burden and people try to avoid it and those who have been to the court know this well. The burden is heavy to the extent that some witnesses were subject to assassination. Therefore, bringing another woman beside the first one reduces the burden upon women witnesses.

Second, women have tender feeling due to their physiological structure that enables them to run their duties towards their children. Therefore, they cannot face hard situations like men such as war, accidents, criminal acts, and terror and keep them under control though they can be clever and knowledgeable.

Third, clinical studies proved that women encounter psychological problems during menstrual period, post-natal period, and pregnancy and after delivery such as depression, lack of concentration, tension, anxiety, sadness, irritability, insecurity, fatigue, changes of mood, tearfulness, aggressive behavior, and short term memory loss which is the most important symptom related to our subject. [Shamshad M. Khand, Why Two-Woman Witnesses]

Women physiological structure, sensitive emotion and psychological changes during menstrual period, post-natal period, and pregnancy and after delivery can affect the testimony and distort the truth resulting in great oppression against one of the opponents. Islam eliminates any road leading to injustice but it does not undermine women legal rights. In fact, Islam accepts the testimony of one woman

in many other transactions. For example, when a husband accuses his wife of non-chastity, she can defend herself by swearing five times to invalidate his accusation. [The Qur'an 24:6-9]

Women are deprived from giving testimony in other religions and systems. The Bible does not give women the right to bear testimony or to defend herself. [Numbers. 5:11:31 and Deuteronomy 22:13-21] This is because women are considered the cause of man's fall from God's grace through the original sin and also Sara, Abraham's wife, had lied. [Genesis, 18: 9-16] Old law in the Christian West used to deprive women from giving testimony too.

Men are in charge of women

The Qur'an addressed the relationship between men and women and their duties in the household. It stated that men are in charge of women. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ ۚ فَالَّذِينَ حَسَبْتُمْ قَدْ بَدَلْتُمْ حِفْظَكُمْ لِلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ وَاللَّي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُمْ فَعِظُوهُمْ وَأَهْجُرُوهُمْ فِي الْمَصَاحِعِ وَأَصْرِهِمْ ۖ فَإِنْ أَطَعْنَكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَ سَبِيلًا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا كَبِيرًا ﴿٣٤﴾ (النساء: 34)

"Men are in charge of women by [right of] what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend [for maintenance] from their wealth. So righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in [the husband's] absence what Allah would have them guard. But those [wives] from whom you fear arrogance - [first] advise them; [then if they persist], forsake them in bed; and [finally], strike them [lightly]. But if they obey you [once more], seek no means against them. Indeed, Allah is ever Exalted and Grand".
[The Qur'an 4:34]

According to the above verse non-Muslims claim that since Islam gives the leadership of the household to men and give them the right to strike their wives and divorce them, it makes women inferior to men.

It is essential for any large or small organization to have a leader. The household is a social organization that has at least two members,

namely the husband and the wife. It needs for sure a leader who must be one of them. The leader has to meet certain requirements in order to maintain and protect the household. These requirements are: taking the responsibility of spending on maintenance and the ability to protect the family. Men meet these requirements more than women due the differences in their physiological and psychological structure. The man is physically structured with more powerful body than that of the woman. He copes with life difficulties to earn for spending and to protect the family. The woman is psychologically structured with more sensitive emotion required for pregnancy, nursing, and taking care of children. Dr. Alex Liberelle who won Noble Prize described the differences between man and woman and said: *“Matters that differentiate between man and woman are not limited to sexual organs, the presence of the womb and pregnancy. These matters are also not limited to the difference of teaching methods of man and woman. In fact, these differences are of basic nature. The tissues of the body in both male and female are different. The chemistry of the bodies is also different in both. Certain glands excrete certain secretions that are only suitable for a specific gender. The woman is completely different from man in terms of the chemical material secreted from the ovary inside the woman’s body.”* [Abdul-Rahman Al-Sheha, Women In the Shade of Islam.P.91]

Men are in charge of women through history. For example the Bible states: *“A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of manFor this reason and because of the angels, the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head.”* [1 Corinthians 11:7 and 10] Therefore, the wife is the glory of her husband. She loses her family name and gets her husband’s family name after marriage. The Bible also states that the husband can confirm or nullify vows or pledges made by his wife. Her husband can cancel any sale contract made by her own name. She cannot sue using her name. And after the death of her husband, a widow must marry his brother. [Numbers: 30 and Genesis: 38]

However, Islam did not give the family leadership to the husband to undermine the wife. Allah ordered the husband and the wife to dwell with love, mercy, tranquility, and spiritual harmony. The Holy Qur’an describes the creation of Eve:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿ وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴾ (الروم: 21)

"And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought". [The Qur'an 30:21]

Men and women are equal in the sight of Allah and the best of them is the most righteous as the Qur'an states:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَى وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاهُ ﴾ (الحجرات: من الآية 13)

"O mankind, indeed we have created you from male and female and made you people and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you." [The Qur'an 49:13]

Muslim men and women are one of another as the Qur'an confirms:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ ﴾ (التوبة: من الآية 71)

"The believing men and believing women are allies of one another. They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and establish prayer and give zakah (charity) and obey Allah and His messenger". [The Qur'an 9:71]

Allah calls both men and women in the Qur'an as believers who do good deeds, and He gives glad tidings for both righteous men and women according to the best of their actions. The Qur'an states:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿ وَمَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَى وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ يُرْزَقُونَ فِيهَا بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴾ (غافر: من الآية 40)

"..but whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer – those will enter paradise, being given provision therein without account." [The Qur'an 40:40]

Islam gives the wife special value in the family. Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said: *“This life is enjoyment and its best enjoyment is the righteous woman (wife).”* He considers those who treat their wives well the best ones by saying: *“The best of you is the best to his family and I am the best among you to my family.”* Also He said: *“The most perfect believers are the best in conduct and best of you are those who are best to their wives.”* [Narrated by Ibn Hanbal]

Therefore, striking an arrogant wife comes only at last after applying other means such as advice and forsaking her in bed in order to bring her back to righteousness. Striking must be on body's parts where it does not harm someone's wife because its purpose is to push her to come back to righteousness. Also the sunna states that striking should be light. Nevertheless, Muslims who strike their wives for no reason are sinful.

A Muslim husband has the right to divorce his wife but it should be through a lawful way. Divorce should not happen immediately as some ignorant Muslims do. It should go through a procedure illustrated in the Qur'an:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَطَلِّقُوهُنَّ لِعَدَّتِهِنَّ وَأَحْصُوا الْعِدَّةَ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ رَبَّكُمْ لَا تُخْرِجُوهُنَّ مِنْ بُيُوتِهِنَّ وَلَا يَخْرُجْنَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفَحِشَةٍ مُبِينَةٍ وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ لَا تَدْرِي لَعَلَّ اللَّهُ يُحْدِثُ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ أَمْرًا ﴿١﴾ فَإِذَا بَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ فَارِقُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ ﴿٢﴾ (الطلاق- 1- ومن الآية 2)

"O Prophet, when you [Muslims] divorce women, divorce them for [the commencement of] their waiting period and keep count of the waiting period, and fear Allah , your Lord. Do not turn them out of their [husbands'] houses, nor should they [themselves] leave [during that period] unless they are committing a clear immorality. And those are the limits [set by] Allah. And whoever transgresses the limits of Allah has certainly wronged himself. You know not; perhaps Allah will bring about after that a [different] matter. And when they have [nearly] fulfilled their term, either retain them according to acceptable terms or part with them according to acceptable terms." [The Qur'an 65:1-2]

Also Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿لِّلَّذِينَ يُؤَلِّونَ مِن دِيَاسِهِمْ تَرَبُّصُ أَرْبَعَةِ أَشْهُرٍ فَإِن فَأَمُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ﴾ (٢٢٦) وَإِن عَزَمُوا

أَطْلَقَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٧﴾ (البقرة: 226-227)

"For those who swear not to have sexual relations with their wives is a waiting time of four months, but if they return [to normal relations] - then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful. And if they decide on divorce - then indeed, Allah is Hearing and Merciful". [The Qur'an 2:226-227]

Therefore, Islam put a period depending on the circumstances for divorce to take place. This period is for the husband to calm down and think many times before taking a final decision. Those who violate the limits of Allah are among the wrongdoers.

The claim that woman rights are violated in Islam

1) Woman legal rights

Arabs used to deprive women of many legal rights before Islam. Pagan Arabs used not to give women inheritance shares. Islam came to stop this unfair treatment toward women. Muslim women got their legal rights since the advent of Islam fourteen centuries ago while women in the west had to wait until recent centuries to get their legal rights.

The Qur'an 2:228 stresses the equality of right for men and women. And the Qur'an, 4:11, 12, and 176 illustrates the distribution of inheritance among males and females. Therefore, mothers, daughters, and wives get inheritance shares. It gives the male a portion equal to that of two women and the husband gets higher portion from his wife's inheritance than she gets from his. This can be seen by non-Muslims as unjust treatment toward women. The point of unequal share between males and females is debated under the title "Muslim woman inheritance" in this book. A Muslim woman has full control over her property. She can sell, buy, and make contracts with others without seeking permissions from her father, her husband, or any one.

According to the Bible, Numbers:27:8-11, a daughter gets her father's inheritance only if he has no son. If he has no daughter, his inheritance goes to his male relatives and there is no mention about his female relatives, including his mother and his wife. Consequently,

female orphans and widows can live in a desperate condition or they should wait for the mercy of their relatives or other people.

A Muslim woman has the right to defend herself when her husband accuses her of non-chastity. She can nullify this accusation according to the procedure mentioned in Qur'an:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَالَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ أَزْوَاجَهُمْ وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُمْ شُهَدَاءُ إِلَّا أَنفُسُهُمْ فَشَهَدَةُ أَحْدِهِمْ أَرْبَعُ شَهَدَاتٍ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ

لَمِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٦﴾ وَالْخَامِسَةُ أَنْ لَعْنَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ ﴿٧﴾ وَيَدْرَأُ عَنْهَا الْعَذَابَ

أَنْ تَشْهَدَ أَرْبَعَ شَهَدَاتٍ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ ﴿٨﴾ وَالْخَامِسَةَ أَنْ غَضَبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهَا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ

الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٩﴾ (النور: ٦ - ٩)

"And those who accuse their wives (of adultery) but have no witnesses except themselves-then the witness of one of them (shall be) four testimonies (swearing) by Allah that indeed, he is of the truthful. And the fifth (oath will be) that the curse of Allah be upon him if he should be among the liars. But it will prevent punishment from her if she gives four testimonies by Allah that he is of the lairs. And the fifth [oath will be] that the wrath of Allah be upon her if he was of the truthful." [The Qur'an 24:6-9]

Unlike the Qur'an, The Bible states that a woman who is accused of non-chastity by her husband has no right to defend herself. According to the Bible she has to go through a humiliating process to prove her chastity: *"If a man takes a wife and, after lying with her, dislikes her and slanders her and gives her a bad name, saying, 'I married this woman, but when I approached her, I did not find proof of her virginity,' then the girl's father and mother shall bring proof that she was a virgin to the town elders at the gate....Then her parents shall display the cloth before the elders of the town...If, however, the charge is true and no proof of the girl's virginity can be found, she shall be brought to the door of her father's house and there the men of the town shall stone her to death..."* [Deuteronomy 22:13-21] Therefore, in this case wives are deprived of the right to give testimony to nullify the accusation. Also she cannot sue using her name. Old law in Christian West used to deprive women from giving testimony too.

A Muslim woman can fulfill her vows or pledges without seeking any permission from her father, her husband, or any person except when a wife performs voluntary fasting. If she is fasting, her husband cannot have sexual intercourse with her during the day so she should inform him to make sure he is not in need of such thing. Whereas the Bible stated that a woman has no right to fulfill her pledges if her father or husband does not approve them; and the husband could nullify any pledges made by his wife. [Numbers: 30]

A Muslim woman has the right over her husband in bearing children. If her husband decides not to have children, he should get the permission from his wife because she has the right to have children. A Muslim woman has the right to accept or reject a man who wants to marry her. Also a wife has the right to self-divorce through the court with or without the consent of her husband. However, a Christian woman has no right to get divorced no matter how the condition of their marriage is. The ban of divorce comes from the Bible: *"But I tell you if anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery."*

2) Woman and education rights

Seeking knowledge by Muslim men and Muslim women is obligatory as Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said: *"Acquiring knowledge is compulsory for every man and woman."* [Narratted by Al-Tabarani] Islam put high emphasis on education because it is the way toward fearing Allah. Qur'an states:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ﴾ (فاطر: من الآية 28)

Only those fear Allah, from among his servants, who have knowledge...." [The Qur'an 35:28]

And the Qur'an urges all believers, male and female, to ask scholars about things that they do not know.

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿فَسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ﴾ (الأنبياء: من الآية 7)

"...so ask the people of message if you do not know." [The Qur'an 21:7]

Women used to ask Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, about Islam with no restrictions. For example, Qur'an has a whole chapter (No.58) which was named after a woman who argued with the Prophet about her husband. This chapter starts with the story of this woman:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿قَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ قَوْلَ الَّتِي تُجَادِلُكَ فِي زَوْجِهَا وَتَشْتَكِينَ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ يَسْمَعُ مَخَاوِرِكُمْ إِنَّا اللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ

بَصِيرٌ ﴿١﴾ (المجادلة:1)

" Certainly has Allah heard the speech of the one who argues with you concerning her husband and directs her complaint to Allah. And Allah hears your dialogue; indeed, Allah is hearing and seeing." [The Qur'an 58:1]

So a Muslim woman is not only permitted to ask scholars directly but also she has the right to argue even with the Prophet. She does not have to go through her husband or any one of her relatives to ask about her concern.

Islam permits a Muslim woman to teach women and men, but it should be from behind a curtain in the case of men to protect her and their hearts from immoral thoughts and temptation. A Muslim woman can become a scholar and the best example for that is Aisha, the wife of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. She was a scholar and she used to be a reference for Muslims in religious matters. Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, praised her knowledge when he advised Muslims to take half of their religion from her. She is one of the most narrators of the statements of the Prophet, peace be upon him.

According to the Bible a women is allowed to learn in quietness but she is not allowed to teach: *"A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent."* [1 Timothy 2:11-12] When a woman wants to inquire about something, she must ask her husband at home to get the answer because she cannot speak in the church. The New Testament of the Bible states: *"As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission as the law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands*

at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church." [I Corinthians 14:34-35] So speaking in the church is not only forbidden for a woman but also it is disgraceful.

3) Woman and spiritual rights

A Muslim woman is not the glory of man but Muslim men and women are one of another as the Qur'an confirms:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ ﴾ (التوبة: من الآية 71)

"The believing men and believing women are allies of one another. They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and establish prayer and give zakah and obey Allah and His messenger...." [The Qur'an 9:71]

Men and women are equal in the sight of Allah and the best of them is the most righteous as the Qur'an stated:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَى وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴾ (الحجرات: 13)

"O mankind, indeed we have created you from a male and a female and made you people and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you; and certainly Allah is Hearing and Knowing." [The Qur'an 49:13]

Allah calls both men and women in the Qur'an as believers who do good deeds, and He gives glad tidings for both righteous men and women according to the best of their actions. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿ وَمَنْ عَمِلْ صَالِحًا مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَى وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ يُرْزَقُونَ فِيهَا بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴾ (غافر: من الآية 40)

"..but whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer – those will enter paradise, being given provision therein without account." [The Qur'an 40:40]

However, a woman is described in the Bible as foolish, wicked, undisciplined and without knowledge and no upright woman among them at all. [Ecclesiastes 7:28), (Zechariah 5:7-8), and (Proverbs 9:13)]

Misconceptions about Legal Penalties (Hudud)

Legal penalties for murder, theft, adultery, and apostasy are either death or amputation of hand and leg. They are considered by non-Muslims extremely harsh.

Punishment for premeditated murder

Punishment for premeditated murder is death. It is a severe punishment against a human being. Is it just or not? Allah prescribed this penalty in the Qur'an where He said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ فِيهَا أَنْ أَنْ النَّفْسَ بِالنَّفْسِ﴾ (المائدة: من الآية 45)

"And We ordained for them therein a life for a life." [The Qur'an 5:45]

Islam saves the life of people through legal retribution. But how death punishment for premeditated murder saves the life of people? Legal retribution satisfies the murdered relatives who calm down and do not think about taking revenge from the criminal family. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقِصَاصِ حَيَوةٌ يَتَأُولَى الْأَلْبَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ﴾ (البقرة: 179)

"And there is for you in legal retribution [saving of] life, O you [people] of understanding, that you may become righteous." [The Qur'an 2:179]

In some countries of the world the relatives of a murdered person kill in revenge many of the criminal's family members. The killing continues between families for years and years because there is no legal retribution or it is not implemented justly. In other countries such as that in the West murderers are given sentences in prison for specific period then they get out of prison and come back to their crimes. In fact, criminals do not think seriously about the consequences of killing people due to the absence of death penalty in these countries. Therefore, death penalty for premeditated murder has started to be implemented in some Western countries.

Death penalty for premeditated murder is a divine law not only in the Qur'an but also in the Bible: *"But if he hits someone with an iron tool so that he dies, he is a murderer. The murderer must surely be put to death. If he strikes him by throwing a stone large enough that he*

could die, and he dies, he is a murderer. The murderer must surely be put to death. Or if he strikes him with a wooden hand weapon so that he could die, and he dies, he is a murderer. The murderer must surely be put to death." [Numbers: 35: 16-18]

Punishment for adultery in Islam

Punishment for adultery in Islam is death by stoning the adulterer and the adulteress with the conditions that the person either male or female is married and four trusted witnesses were present and witnessed the sexual act through their naked eyes to make sure that sexual intercourse took place with no doubt. This punishment is severe too but why? Islam puts noble disciplines to protect the family and preserve its integrity. Committing adultery by any couple destroys the integrity of the family. It leaves the adulterer and the adulteress and their relatives in a shameful condition thus they lose their dignity in the society. Deadly diseases can be spread within the society members as a result of adultery. The first victims of sexual diseases are husbands and wives who are involved in this crime. Illegitimate children who are born out of adultery lose their real genealogy and suffer from discrimination in the society.

Some husbands kill their mates who commit adultery and sometimes they kill the adulterers. In some Muslim countries adulteress's relatives kill their daughters who commit adultery to preserve their dignity (honor killing). Nevertheless, honor killing is not accepted by Islamic law because it is the duty of the Muslim judge to give adultery sentences. And those who commit honor killing are trialed for their crimes according to the Islamic law.

Due to these disorders in the society as the result of adultery Allah prescribed harsh stoning until death against adulterers and adulteresses to stop such disorders. Nevertheless, it is very difficult to be proved because four trusted witnesses must see the sexual intercourse. The witness of one or two or three witnesses is not accepted before the law therefore the penalty of adultery has been practiced rarely. It happened about few times during the life of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. However, in these cases the crimes of adultery were not proved by four eye-witnesses but by the confession of the adulterer or the adulteress. Similarly, it happened

only few times through confession during the Islamic history with no single case through four eye-witnesses. Adulterers and adulteresses confessed in order to purify themselves from their sins. This sincere repentance grants them the forgiveness of Allah and His Paradise in the hereafter.

Death penalty by stoning for adultery is a divine law in the Bible: *"If a man is caught having sexual relations with a married woman both the man who had relations with the woman and the woman herself must die; in this way you will purge evil from Israel. If a virgin is engaged to a man and another man meets her in the city and has sexual relations with her, you must bring the two of them to the gate of that city and stone them to death, the young woman because she did not cry out though in the city and the man because he violated his neighbor's fiancée; in this way you will purge evil from among you."* [Deuteronomy 22:22-24]

Punishment for theft in Islam

Punishment for theft in Islam is amputation of the hand. It is a harsh punishment. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَالسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ فَاقْطَعُوا أَيْدِيَهُمَا جِزَاءً بِمَا كَسَبَا نَكَالًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

﴿المائدة:38﴾

"[As for] the thief, the male and the female, amputate their hands in recompense for what they committed as a deterrent [punishment] from Allah. And Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise". [The Qur'an 5:38]

The opponents of Islam misunderstood this punishment and tell people that there is no pity in Islam but brutality. First we say to them that Allah prescribed this punishment against thieves while He the Almighty knows the best for human beings. Second this legal penalty is strong enough to protect people properties and bring public security into existence. In non-Muslim countries a fine or a period in prison is enough as a punishment against thieves. When we compare the legal penalty for theft in Islam to that in non-Muslim countries, we will find for sure that in Islam thieves think many times before stealing because their hands are more valuable than all properties of earth. Therefore, it

happened only few times during the Islamic history. The result is that people feel safe and protected to the point that they can leave their properties in markets with no guards. Also huge amount of money is transferred between banks in the same city or in different cities such as that in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia without armed vehicles. However, in other systems such as those in the West thieves not only steal but are ready to murder because they know that it is only a matter of certain years in prison. Consequently, people do not feel safe to the point that they are afraid to take money with them while walking in the street or shopping in the market. Islam wants all people, Muslims and non-Muslims, to live in security so this penalty is implemented against Muslims thieves who steal from non-Muslims. Indeed the legal penalty for theft in Islam is severe but it is justified.

Furthermore, amputation of hand needs the following conditions: the amount of money must be equal to a quarter of *dinnar* of gold (4.25gm) or more, the stolen properties must be in a safe place, and the stealing case must reach the Muslim ruler or the court; but the thief can avoid the penalty if the stolen person forgives him before going to the ruler or to the court. Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said: *"Forgive legal penalties among you but any one reaches me it must be implemented."* [Reported by Sunan Abi Dawood and Al-Termizi]

Islam looks at the condition of people at the time of theft crime. Legal penalty for theft is not implemented during the time of starvation because people are forced to steal in order to save their lives. Islam seeks not hardship against people but security and tranquility.

Punishment for apostasy in Islam

Punishment for apostasy in Islam is death. Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said: *"Whoever changes his religion, kill him."* [Reported by Bukhari and Abu Dawud] Non-Muslims say that Islam claims that people are free to believe in any religion but when a Muslim renegades from Islam, he is punished by death. Where is the freedom of belief?

Islam is the true religion of Allah. Allah wants from people to come to His religion willingly because there is no compulsion in Islam. A person should know that he is going to take the most

important decision in his life. So he should accept Islam sincerely after believing that it is the only true religion of Allah. It is not a matter of accepting Islam for some time and if it does not fit his desires then he can leave it. When this happens, ignorant Muslims may do the same thing not because they have doubt about Islam but they can do it for worldly things to fulfill their evil desires. This can bring a major dilemma to the Muslim society. Islam protects Muslim society from religious corruption and saves Muslims from Allah's wrath in this life and in the hereafter. Also opponents of Islam can convert to Islam and then commit apostasy in order to bring doubt about Islam for weak believers.

It is very important to know that death punishment for apostasy is executed after giving the apostate three days as a chance to advise him and to warn him against the death punishment he will face in this life and the torment of the Hellfire in the hereafter. Who is willing to lose his or her life after having this chance? I think no one is willing. Accordingly, no single case of punishment for apostasy took place during the time of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. Hypocrites who have diseases in their hearts show Islam in public and hide disbelief. In this way they escape the punishment in this life but they receive the worse torment in the lowest depth of the Hellfire. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ فِي الدَّرَكِ الْأَسْفَلِ مِنَ النَّارِ وَلَنْ يَجِدَ لَهُمْ نَصِيرًا﴾ (النساء: 145)

"Indeed, the hypocrites will be in the lowest depths of the Fire - and never will you find for them a helper" . [The Qur'an 4:145]

Disloyalty to a country or even to a regime is considered a major crime. Criminals in many cases are sentenced to death to protect the integrity of the country or the regime. Islam has to be more protected than a country; it is a way of life and leaving it brings corruption to the whole life.

Misconceptions about Muslims and Human rights

Divisions among Muslims

Nowadays, there have been many divisions among Muslims. Allah the Almighty warned the believers against division. He guided them to the right way to bring unity among them and to prevent division. The Prophet, peace be upon him, made brotherhood between Al-muhajireen (the Emmigrants from Makkah) and Al-a'nsar (the helpers). This brotherhood exceeded the imagination of any social reform in the world through human history because every one used to ask his brother to share his wealth. In fact, Al-muhajireen and Al-a'nsar were enemies to each other but after they embraced Islam they became brethren. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَى شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُمْ مِنْهَا كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٠٣﴾ (آل عمران: 103)

"And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided. And remember the favor of Allah upon you - when you were enemies and He brought your hearts together and you became, by His favor, brothers. And you were on the edge of a pit of the Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus does Allah make clear to you His verses that you may be guided." [The Qur'an 3:103]

Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, planted faith and righteousness in the hearts of the believers for many years and then he established the Islamic State in Al-Madina. Faith and righteousness were the fundamentals for the fulfillment of Muslims unity and succession on the earth. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَى لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا يَعْبُدُونَنِي لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا وَمَنْ كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾ (النور: 55)

"Allah has promised those who have believed among you and done righteous deeds that He will surely grant them succession [to authority] upon the earth just as He granted it to those before

them and that He will surely establish for them [therein] their religion which He has preferred for them and that He will surely substitute for them, after their fear, security, [for] they worship Me, not associating anything with Me. But whoever disbelieves after that - then those are the defiantly disobedient". [The Qur'an 24:55]

Indeed, through faith and righteousness Muslims brought the major part of the earth into unity during more than one thousand years. However, when faith and righteousness decreased, division among Muslims increased until the complete fall of Islamic State at the end of Ottoman Caliphate during the beginning of the 20th century. Unity is a big grace from Allah for the believers who deserve it but when people go astray they do not deserve it. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَمْ يَكُ مُغَيِّرًا نِعْمَةً أَنْعَمَهَا عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنفُسِهِمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ

عَلِيمٌ ﴿٥٣﴾ (الأنفال: 53)

"That is because Allah would not change a favor which He had bestowed upon a people until they change what is within themselves. And indeed, Allah is Hearing and Knowing." [The Qur'an 8:53]

Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said: "*Jews divided into seventy one sects and Christians divided into seventy two sects and this nation (Muslims) will divide into seventy three sects.*" Sins and disobedience of Allah brought divisions to people through human history. Allah mentioned the division of previous nations and warned the believers not to be like them. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاخْتَلَفُوا مِن بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَأُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

﴿١٠٥﴾ (آل عمران: 105)

"And do not be like the ones who became divided and differed after the clear proofs had come to them. And those will have a great punishment." [The Qur'an 3:105]

Therefore, unity and prosperity will not be achieved again unless Muslims come back to higher levels of sincere faith and righteousness. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنفُسِهِمْ﴾ (الرعد: من الآية 11)

"Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves." [The Qur'an 43:11]

Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, told us about the decline in the Islamic State due to corruption in it but he gave us the glad tidings about a new Islamic state similar to the first one. Signs of a new Islamic state have started to appear on the horizon. Muslims have started to come back to their religion and non-Muslims are converting to Islam in multitudes. Nowadays Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world. It is expected that the population of many European countries will have Muslim majority before the end of this century. Only then believers deserve the support from their Lord to bring a new unity for the establishment of a new Islamic era. It is a promise from Allah and He is the best to fulfill His promises.

Backwardness of Muslims

Islam started in Makkah 14 centuries ago while the people of Makkah were in darkness. They were called the illiterates. Allah sent to them from among themselves Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, to teach them. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ

وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٢﴾ (الجمعة: 2)

"It is He who has sent among the unlettered a Messenger from themselves reciting to them His verses and purifying them and teaching them the Book and wisdom - although they were before in clear error." [The Qur'an 62:2]

The first verse of the Qur'an ordered the Prophet to read and informed him that Allah taught man by pen what he does not know. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ ﴿١﴾ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ﴿٢﴾ اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ ﴿٣﴾ الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ

﴿٤﴾ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ﴿٥﴾ (العلق من 1 : 5)

"Recite in the name of your Lord who created -Created man from a clinging substance. Recite, and your Lord is the most Generous - Who taught by the pen -Taught man that which he knew not." [The Qur'an 96:1-5]

Seeking knowledge by men and women is obligatory as Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said, “*Acquiring knowledge is compulsory for every Muslim*” (Narrated by Ibn Majah). Islam put high emphasis on education because it is the way toward fearing Allah. The Qur’an states:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ﴾ (فاطر: من الآية 28)

"Only those fear Allah, from among his servants, who have knowledge...." [The Qur’an 35:28]

The Qur'an differentiates those who know from those who do not know. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾ (الزمر: من الآية 9)

"Are those who know equal to those who do not know?" [The Qur’an 39:9]

Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, praised the people of knowledge and those who are acquiring knowledge. He said: "Allah will honor the people of knowledge with higher degrees in Paradise." And Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ﴾ (المجادلة: من الآية 11)

"Allah will raise those who have believed among you and those who were given knowledge, by degrees. And Allah is Acquainted with what you do." [The Qur’an 58:11]

Therefore, Muslims made a big progress in many fields of science such as mathematics (especially algebra), astronomy, medicine, geography, chemistry, physics, arts, architecture, etc while Europe was in the Dark Age. Such progress was the fundamental element for the Western modern science. However, Muslims nowadays suffer from backwardness because they lost power as the result of Islamic State division. Division occurred as a punishment from Allah because they went away from the teaching of Islam. Muslims can build a new civilization if they hold fast to Islam as Allah wants. Allah promised believers with success in this life if they come back to Him sincerely. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا
أَسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَى لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُم مِّن بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا
يَعْبُدُونَنِي لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا وَمَن كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾﴾ (النور: 55)

"Allah has promised those who have believed among you and done righteous deeds that He will surely grant them succession [to authority] upon the earth just as He granted it to those before them and that He will surely establish for them [therein] their religion which He has preferred for them and that He will surely substitute for them, after their fear, security, [for] they worship Me, not associating anything with Me. But whoever disbelieves after that - then those are the defiantly disobedient." [The Qur'an 24:55]

Muslims and misconduct

The majority of non-Muslims look at Islam through Muslim conduct. Muslims spread Islam to many regions of the world by their good conduct. For example, Muslim traders spread Islam in India, China, Indonesia, and Malaysia by their good dealing. Nowadays, noble characters of Muslims attract many people around the world to Islam.

We should bear in mind that Allah sent His prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, to fulfill noble characters. Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said: "I was sent not except to fulfill noble characters." He was the example of noble characters as Allah described him in the Qur'an:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٤﴾﴾ (القم: 4)

"And indeed, you are of a great moral character." [The Qur'an 68:4]

Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, used to ask Allah to guide him to the best noble characters with this supplication: "O Allah guide me to the best noble characters. Indeed no one can guide to the best of it except You." Muslims can reach through their good conduct the higher level of righteousness as Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said: "Indeed the believer reaches through his good character the level (in the hereafter) of fasting and standing (in prayer

at night) man." Also He said: "The closest among you to me on the Day of Resurrection are the best in good conduct."

Any type of misconduct is prohibited in Islam because it is considered part of evil deeds that lead to the Hellfire. Since misconduct is directed towards human beings, Allah does not forgive it unless its victims forgive. Therefore, misconduct is really a major way to the punishment in the Hellfire for Muslim wrongdoers.

Misconduct committed by some Muslims gave some non-Muslims false impression of Islam and deterred them from thinking about it. In fact Muslims with misconduct must not be representatives of Islam. Wrongdoers exist in all societies of the world and should not be taken as examples to evaluate any people. However, opponents of Islam have propagated Muslim wrongdoers' misconduct to defame Islam and Muslims. Fortunately, the people of thought did not listen but instead they searched about Islam in its pure sources particularly the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Their sincerity in searching for the truth led many of them to accept Islam. Many priests and monks are examples of the people of thought. Allah described them in the Qur'an:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَإِذَا سَمِعُوا مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ تَرَىٰ أَعْيُنُهُمْ تَفِيضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ مِمَّا عَرَفُوا مِنَ الْحَقِّ يَقُولُونَ

رَبَّنَا ءَامَنَّا فَاكْتُبْنَا مَعَ الشَّاهِدِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾ (المائدة: 83)

"And when they hear what has been revealed to the Messenger (Muhammad), you see their eyes overflowing with tears because of what they have recognized of the truth. They say, "Our Lord, we have believed, so register us among the witnesses." [The Qur'an 5:83]

Muslims and terrorism

Terrorism is a misconception against Islam and Muslims which has been raised by the Western media recently. This misconception was spread in the world after the event of September 11 at the beginning of the current century more than before. Terrorism dogma is manmade mostly for political considerations in order to defame Islam and Muslims. Nonetheless, Islam means peace and it stands strongly against killing innocent people either Muslims or non-Muslims. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿مَنْ قَتَلَ نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَمَنْ

أَحْيَاهَا فَكَأَنَّمَا أَحْيَا النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا﴾ (المائدة: من الآية 32)

"...whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption [done] in the land - it is as if he had slain mankind entirely. And whoever saves one - it is as if he had saved mankind entirely." [The Qur'an 5:32]

Islam forbids killing. Whoever kills any person, Muslim or non-Muslim, is a murderer and deserves punishment. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَمَنْ يَقْتُلْ مُؤْمِنًا مُتَعَمِّدًا فَجَزَاءُ لَهُ جَهَنَّمُ خَالِدًا فِيهَا وَغَضِبَ اللَّهُ

عَلَيْهِ وَلَعَنَهُ، وَأَعَدَّ لَهُ عَذَابًا عَظِيمًا﴾ (النساء: 93)

"But whoever kills a believer intentionally - his recompense is Hell, wherein he will abide eternally, and Allah has become angry with him and has cursed him and has prepared for him a great punishment." [The Qur'an 4:93]

Non-Muslims in Muslim countries are protected by the Islamic law. Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said: *"Whoever kills one (non-Muslim) under contract (of Muslim protection) will never smell the scent of Paradise."* [Reported by Ibn Majah]

Some Muslims commit suicide attacks and kill people. Therefore, non-Muslims believe that Islam tolerates the killing of non-Muslims. They give this judgment without taking the ways of justice to prove their accusation. It is important to know the answer of the following questions:

Why do some Muslims commit suicide attacks?

Suicide attacks have been committed for the following reasons:

- 1) Some Muslims have been under severe oppression such as that taking place in Palestine by the Israelites who kill Palestinians, destroy their homes and land, torture them in jails, drive them out of their land, etc. Some Palestinians take revenge from the aggressors by suicide attacks.
- 2) Some Muslims look at the suffering of Muslims in the world such as that in Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan, etc. and appoint themselves to take revenge from the aggressors by suicide attacks.

Does Islam allow suicide attacks?

Despite the fact that the aggressors (states or individuals) commit evil action that resulted in the killing of millions of Muslims, Islam does not allow to take revenge through suicide attacks that result usually in the death of the attackers, civilians and sometimes few of the enemy. Muslim scholars such as Al-Uthaimen and Al-Albani do not consider this as an act of martyrdom and the attackers are sinful except if they are ignorant. They stated that Muslims in the world have suffered from suicide attacks because they increase the aggression of the enemy.

Why does not Islam allow suicide attacks?

Committing suicide in general is prohibited. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُمْ رَحِيمًا﴾ (النساء: من الآية 29)

"And do not kill yourselves [or one another]. Indeed, Allah is to you ever Merciful." [The Qur'an 4:29]

Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, stated the punishment of committing suicide: *Indeed, whoever kills himself will certainly be punished in Hellfire, where he shall dwell forever.*" [Narrated by Al-Bukhari & Muslim] The Prophet also said: *"He who kills himself with anything, Allah will torment him with that in the Hellfire."* [Narrated by Muslim]

Islam prescribes Jihad on Muslims instead of suicide attacks to stop the aggression against them as long as they have the ability. Jihad must be under the Islamic state leadership and not under individuals or groups.

Results of war against terrorism

The West has initiated war against terrorism in the world, especially in Muslim countries. The results of this war are:

- a. Killing more than one million of civilians in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other countries.
- b. Defaming Islam and Muslims.
- c. Bringing enmity against 1.5 billion Muslims in the world.
- d. Throwing thousands of innocent people in jails for years and years.

The standards of this war are mostly for political considerations. Ironically, these standards are not implemented against the Israelites who are committing the state terror against the Palestinians.

The claim that Islam promotes racism and violates human rights

Islam came to put an end to racism and to establish equality. Equality among people in Islam is highly respected. The rich and the poor, the leaders and the workers, the men and the women, the white and the black are treated equally in Islam. Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said; *“All of you are from Adam and Adam was created out of dust. There is no credit for Arabs over Non-Arabs or for Non-Arabs over Arabs except in Taqwa (piety, righteousness, and fear of Allah).”* Islam holds no discrimination due to color, wealth, sex, origin, or language. It is only piety or righteousness that makes people different in the sight of Allah in this life and in the hereafter. Allah states in the Qur’an:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْفُسُكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ﴾ (الحجرات: من الآية 13)

"Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed Allah is Knowing and Acquainted." [The Qur'an 49:13]

All people are equal in humanity. Muslims (the rich, the poor, the white, the black, the leaders, the workers) gather in mosques to perform prayers beside each other in lines five times a day. When any one of them comes to mosque first, he takes the first line regardless of his color or status. Also when Muslims from different nationalities with different colors and wealth gather during pilgrimage in Mecca wearing the same clothes, they reflect the superior equality in Islam. Such daily and yearly environment of equality does not exist in other social systems in the world except in Islam.

During a halt on a journey, the Companions divided work among themselves for preparing food. The Prophet, peace be upon him, took upon himself the task of collecting firewood. His companions pleaded that they would do it and that he needed not take the trouble, but he replied : *"It is true, but I do not like to attribute any distinction to myself. Allah does not like the man who considers himself superior to his companions."*

Human, moral, legal, and official rights in Islam are preserved as long as they do not violate its principles. All Muslims have equal rights in their societies. Islam gives non-Muslims their rights too.

Since describing all rights in Islam is out of the scope of this book, the reader can find this in the book titled: "Essential Rights" by Mohammad Bin Salih al-Othaimin published by International Islamic House"

The claim that Islam promotes slavery

Slavery was practiced in the Arab regions before Islam. It was impossible to eliminate it immediately for many reasons such as:

- Slavery was a famous trade thus banning it would have caused great loss for the masters of the slaves and uprising, especially by new Muslims.
- Freeing slaves at once would have left them in poverty because they had no housing and properties to start new life.

Therefore, Islam put two methodologies to deal with slavery. The first methodology was to bring human respect to slaves. Islam urged Muslims to treat their slaves kindly. Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, warned those who mistreated their slaves about the wrath of Allah in this life and in the hereafter. Due to this human respect slaves lived with their masters in harmony. Thus we have not seen uprising on the side of slaves against their masters during the Islamic history. In fact a lot of slaves preferred to stay slaves rather than to be freed because they found the manifestation of mercy and human respect with their masters.

The second methodology was through enacting obligatory expiations and calls to great reward. Islam put many ways to end slavery such as:

- freeing slaves for expiation of unlawful oaths;
- freeing slaves for expiation of killing by mistake;
- freeing slaves for expiation of sexual intercourse with one's wife during the day of Ramadan;
- freeing slaves for expiation of *'Thihar'* (making someone's wife unlawful to him).
- freeing slaves by their masters voluntarily for gaining rewards from Allah.
- freeing slaves through agreement between masters and their slaves who are allowed to have part time jobs for earning money to buy themselves from their masters.

Through the above methodologies Islam reduced slavery gradually without causing reaction through Islamic history until complete elimination. However, slaves in non-Islamic world had to wait until recently to get their freedom but after great struggles and sacrifices. It was really a dream for them to find their freedom as Martin Luther King described it in his famous speech 'I have a dream'.

Misconceptions about Jihad (Holy War)

Jihad or holy war is illustrated in many chapters of the Holy Qur'an. The Islamic state led Jihad throughout Islamic history. Non-Muslims raised a big misconception against Jihad because they think that it is just a means to compel non-Muslims to become Muslims.

What does Jihad in Islam mean?

There are two major types of Jihad:

- 2) Jihad against evil through which a person struggles against Satanic temptations and unlawful desires. Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said: *"The best jihad is by one who strives against (the evil of) his own self for Allah, the Mighty and Majestic."* [Reported by Tabarani]
- 3) Jihad (holy war) against the enemy through which Muslims fight to:

-Defend their people, land, and properties.

-Remove barriers that prevent Muslims from introducing Islam to non-Muslims.

The claim that Islam was spread by sword has no validity for the following historical points:

- a. The first believers accepted Islam by their free will during the Makkah period, 13 years, before the establishment of Islamic state. Muslims were weak and faced hardships during this period. As a matter of fact they were forced by the infidels of Makkah to leave Islam but they preferred to die instead of leaving Islam.
- b. After the immigration of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, and his followers from Makkah to Al-Madinah, he established Islamic State. Then the infidels of Makkah and the tribes around Al-Madinah tried to invade Al-Madinah in order to kill the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, to extinguish Islam. Muslims had to defend themselves through different battles until Muslims achieved the biggest victory when they came back to their homeland, namely Makkah.
- c. Then the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, and his Caliphs after him sent letters to emperors and kings of Rome, Persia, and Egypt to invite them to Islam peacefully. However, they rejected the invitations and sent their armies to fight Muslims. Therefore, Muslims

faced them in many battles and recorded major victories against the Romans, the Persians, and others yet they did not force any one to convert to Islam. People of Rome, Persia, Egypt, and other people embraced Islam willingly. In fact they considered Muslims and their coming to their regions as saviors to save them from the oppression and tyranny of their emperors and kings.

d. Muslim traders went to many regions of the world such as India, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, and other regions. They introduced Islam through their good dealing and kind characters which reflect the principles of Islam. People of these regions embraced Islam by their free will. Nowadays some of these regions represent the biggest Muslim countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia.

e. Romans, Persians, Egyptians, Asians, and Africans who embraced Islam were proud of Islam and became the defenders of Islam. Mongols, who invaded and conquered Muslim regions and killed millions of Muslims accepted Islam later on and became part of the Islamic State!

f. Those who did not accept Islam from among the Christians and Jews lived among Muslims in the Islamic State in peace and security and they were not forced to convert to Islam.

g. After the collapse of the Islamic State, Muslims in the world remained Muslims. This is a clear indication that they came to Islam willingly with sincerity.

h. Islam means peace and Jihad is the exception. Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said: *"Do not desire an encounter with the enemy; but if you do encounter them, be firm."* [Reported by Muslim]

Nowadays, Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world despite the fact that Muslims are weak and do not have the power to force any one to Islam! Where is the sword of opponents of Islam?

Why did not Muslims force non-Muslims to Islam?

Muslims follow the divine revelation from Allah, namely the Qur'an and the Sunnah, the teaching of the Prophet, peace be upon him, which state that there should be no compulsion in religion. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انفِصَامَ لَهَا وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾ (البقرة: 256)

"There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion. The right course has become clear from the wrong. So whoever disbelieves in Taghut (any deity worshiped besides Allah) and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing." [The Qur'an 2:256]

However, people must bear in mind that the truth is clear for them so whoever accepts it will be saved in Paradise and whoever rejects it will be one of the losers in the Hellfire in the Hereafter.

Also Allah instructed His Messenger not to compel people to become Muslims. He wants them to come to Islam by their free will with sincerity. Allah said:

قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَآمَنَ مَن فِي الْأَرْضِ كُلُّهُم جَمِيعًا أَفَأنتَ تكْرِهُ النَّاسَ حَتَّىٰ يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ﴾ (يونس: 99)

"And had your Lord willed, those on earth would have believed - all of them entirely. Then, [O Muhammad], would you compel the people in order that they become believers?" [The Qur'an 10:99]

Witnesses from non-Muslims

Mark Glenn is an American Catholic of Lebanese descent, the father of 6, and a former school teacher; who has taught American History, History of Western Civilization, as well as the Latin, Italian, French, and Spanish languages. He said in "Junk History": "*Christians and Jews were not "converted by the sword" as is commonly taught and believed. Christians and Jews were allowed to keep and practice their religion within those areas where the Muslims had gained hegemony.*"

Christian missionary, T.W. Arnold said: "... of any organized attempt to force the acceptance of Islam on the non-Muslim population, or of any systematic persecution intended to stamp out the Christian religion, we hear nothing. Had the caliphs (Muslim leaders) chosen to adopt either course of action, they might have swept away Christianity as easily as Ferdinand and Isabella drove Islam out of Spain, or Louis XIV made Protestantism...."

Holy war before Islam

The Bible mentioned holy war in different books such as Number 31:9-10, 1 Samuel 15:3-4, Jeremiah 48:10, Ezekiel 9:5-7, Matthew 10:34-37 and Luke 12:49-51.

Ethics of Jihad in Islam

Islam established many ethics in Jihad to ensure justice. Islam wants to save people from devils in this life and to save them from the Hell-fire in the Hereafter. Muslims took the risk in Jihad where a lot of them were killed as martyrs to save people and non-Muslims who killed them and embraced Islam later on became thankful to Muslim martyrs. Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said: *"Allah laughs at two persons, a believer and a disbeliever. The disbeliever killed the believer in a battle yet both enter Paradise because the disbeliever embraced Islam after the battle."* Islam instructs fighters in Jihad to fight only those who fight them and once the enemy stops fighting and seeks peace, Muslim have to incline to peace. Allah said:

قَالَ تَمَّالِي: وَإِنْ جَنَحُوا لِلسَّلَامِ فَاجْنَحْ لَهَا وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٦١﴾ (الأنفال: 61)

"And if they incline to peace, then incline to it [also] and rely upon Allah . Indeed, it is He who is the Hearing, the Knowing. "
[The Qur'an 8:61]

The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, addressed Muslims before any battle not to kill women, children, elders, men who do not fight, and animals; and not to cut trees or to destroy properties. Muslims should give the enemy (who insists to fight) three options before any confrontation: Islam or tax or fighting. If they accept Islam willingly, they become brothers in Islam. If they reject Islam, they are not forced to accept it but they have to pay tax. If they reject paying tax, they incline to fighting and then Muslims should fight their enemy. If Muslims achieve victory, they do not have the right to force their enemy to become Muslims but to pay tax. A portion of the tax is used to protect non-Muslims or to help their needy.

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