ISLAM:
A Concise Introduction

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Rendered into English by
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Islam: A Concise Introduction

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Translator’s Foreword

Islam: A Concise Introduction is a condensed version of Mīzân, a comprehensive treatise on the contents of Islam by the author: Javed Aḥmad Ghāmidī. The author himself has produced this abridged version. While Mīzân took almost two decades for its completion, this abridgement understandably just took six months.

This effort to expound the contents of Islam is not a new one. Preceding Ghāmidī is an illustrious series of names who have ventured forth to present Islam the way they have understood it. All these efforts are commendable and merit deep deliberation. A serious student should perhaps conduct a comparative study to gauge the approaches followed by each.

A distinction which perhaps can be regarded as the hallmark of Ghāmidī’s research is his categorization of the contents of Islam in the light of the Qurʾān itself. According to him, the Qurʾān divides the contents of Islam into two categories: al-Ḥikmah and al-Kitāb. While the former refers to topics related to the philosophy of religion, the latter to those that relate to divine law (sharīʿah).
Ghāmidī has further classified these two categories into sub-categories. *al-Ḥikmah* comprises two sub-categories: faith and ethics and *al-Kitāb* comprises ten sub-categories: The *Sharīʿah* of Worship Rituals, The Social *Sharīʿah*, The Political *Sharīʿah*, The Economic *Sharīʿah*, The *Sharīʿah* of Preaching, The *Sharīʿah* of Jihād, The Penal *Sharīʿah*, The Dietary *Sharīʿah*, Islamic Customs and Etiquette, and Oaths and Atonements.

The scheme of the book is based on this categorization. Part I consists of topics related to *al-Ḥikmah* and Part II consists of topics related to *al-Kitāb*. A preamble to these two parts “The Religion of Islam” introduces the reader to the overall structure of Islam.

It may also be pertinent to point out here that this abridgement should perhaps be considered a gateway to the more elaborate work, *Mīzān*. It is more of a compilation of the conclusions reached by the author in understanding the contents of Islam. Arguments and technical discussions have been left out for the sake of brevity and simplicity. The serious student is advised to look up each abridged discussion in the parent book. However, for the common reader, the current book suffices to give a concise introduction of Islam as understood by the author.

This research is by no means the final word on this topic; it is perhaps the first step in a new direction. Criticisms and comments from the readers, both on the content and the format, will certainly help in improving forthcoming editions.

Here I would like to express my deep gratitude to Mr Iftikhar Tabassum for painstakingly tallying the translation with the original and giving valuable
suggestions. I am also thankful to my son Ibrahim for thoroughly proof-reading the manuscript, to Mr Azeem Ayub for formatting it and to Mr Moazzam Safdar for supervising the printing process. May the Almighty reward all of them for their efforts.

Shehzad Saleem
Al-Mawrid, Lahore
February, 2009
Author’s Foreword

The only religion acceptable to God is Islam. In my book Mīzān, I have elaborated upon its contents the way I have understood them. al-Islām¹ is an abridgement of Mīzān². It presents the basic idea of the parent book in a simple way while leaving out its technical discussions and the reasoning behind them.

Whatever I have written so far to explain and elucidate Islam owes much to what I acquired from my esteemed mentor Imām Amīn Ahṣan Islāḥī. It is from him that I have learnt the art of deliberation on religion and thus it is only befitting that like all my previous books, I dedicate this book to him as well.

Javed Aḥmad Ghāmidī
Al-Mawrid, Lahore
25th December, 2007

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1. The original Urdu title of this translation is al-Islām. The current translation is from the second edition of al-Islām published in July 2008. (Translator)
The Preamble

The Religion of Islam
The Religion of Islam

1. The Sources of Religion

Islam is the guidance which was first inspired by the Almighty in human nature and after that it was given by Him with all essential details to mankind through His prophets. Muhammad (sws) is the last of these prophets. Consequently, it is now he alone who in this world is the sole source of this religion. It is only through him that man can receive divine guidance and it is only he who, through his words, deeds or tacit approvals, has the authority to regard something as part of Islam until the Day of Judgement.

From the Prophet Muhammad (sws), this religion has been given to the ummah through the consensus of his Companions (rta) and through their perpetual practice and perpetual recitation in two forms:

1. Tacit approvals refer to approvals of the Prophet (sws) as per which something in the capacity of religion was done before him and he did not disapprove it.
2. Consensus refers to total agreement without any difference.
3. Perpetual practice and perpetual recitation (called tawātur in technical terms) refer to the transmission of religion through reading, writing, speaking and practically adhering to it generation after generation.
i. The Qur’ān
The Qur’ān was revealed by Allah to Muḥammad (sws) – the last of the prophets – and it has since then remained with the ummah with the unanimous verdict from the ummah itself that it is this very book which was revealed to the Prophet (sws), and which his Companions (rta), through their consensus and through their perpetual recitation, delivered to the world without the slightest alteration.

ii. The Sunnah
By Sunnah is meant that tradition of Prophet Abraham’s (sws) religion which the Prophet Muḥammad (sws) instituted among his followers as religion after reviving and reforming it and after making certain additions to it.

There is no difference between it and the Qur’ān as far as its authenticity is concerned. Just as the Qur’ān has been received by the ummah through the consensus of the Prophet’s Companions (rta) and through their perpetual recitation, the Sunnah has been received by it through their consensus and through their perpetual practice and stands validated like the Qur’ān in every period of time through the consensus of the ummah.

2. The Essence of Religion
The essence of religion, in Qur’ānic terms, is ‘ibādah (worship) of God. Worship means humility and servility. If this humility and servility exists in a person with a true comprehension of the mercy, power, providence and
wisdom of the Almighty then it is instrumental in totally humiliating a person before Him with His great love and great fear. This humbling of a person before the Almighty is, in fact, an internal feeling. Remembering God, expressing gratitude to Him, fearing His displeasure, devoting one’s self to Him, showing trust in Him, submitting one’s self and all of one’s affairs to Him and pleasing Him at every step – all of these are the inner manifestations of this relationship between the worshipped God and His worshippers. In the external self, this humility and servility appears in the external manifestations of worship: kneeling, prostrating, glorifying and praising the Almighty, supplicating before Him and devoting life and wealth for His pleasure. However, since a person is not mere beliefs; he also has a practical existence in this world, this worship relates to this practical existence as well and in this manner becomes inclusive of obedience. It now requires that a person’s outer-self also bow before the Creator before Whom his inner-self has bowed.

3. Definition of Religion

When “worship”, in order to fulfill the rights of the relationship between a servant and His Lord, prescribes metaphysical and ethical bases, determines rituals and stipulates limits, then in the terminology of the Qurʾān, this is called “religion” (dīn). The form of this religion which the Almighty has explained to mankind through His prophets is called “the religion” (al-dīn) by the Qurʾān, and its followers are directed by the Qurʾān to fully and faithfully adopt it in their lives and not create any divisions in it.
4. Content of Religion

The metaphysical and moral bases of this worship which have been prescribed by religion are called *al-Ḥikmah*, and the rituals and limits prescribed for it by religion are called *al-Kitāb* by the Qur’ān. The latter is also called *sharī‘ah*, which means law.

*al-Ḥikmah* has always remained the same in all revealed religions; however, *al-Kitāb* has remained different due to evolution and change in human civilizations and societies.

A study of divine scriptures shows that *sharī‘ah* constitutes the major portion of the Torah and *ḥikmah* generally constitutes the Injīl. The Psalms are hymns which glorify the Almighty and are a forerunner to the *ḥikmah* of the Injīl. The Qur’ān was revealed as a masterpiece of literature comprising both *sharī‘ah* and *ḥikmah* giving warning to those who evade it and glad tidings to those who follow it.

*al-Ḥikmah* basically comprises the following two topics:

i. Faith
ii. Morals and Morality

*al-Kitāb* comprises the following ten topics:

i. The *Sharī‘ah* of Worship Rituals
ii. The Social *Sharī‘ah*
iii. The Political *Sharī‘ah*
iv. The Economic *Sharī‘ah*
v. The *Sharī‘ah* of Preaching
vi. The Sharī‘ah of Jihād
vii. The Penal Sharī‘ah
viii. The Dietary Sharī‘ah
ix. Islamic Customs and Etiquette
x. Oaths and Atonements

This is all as far as the content of religion is concerned.

5. Prophets and Messengers

The envoys of God who have brought this religion are called “Prophets”. A study of the Qur’ān shows that besides being assigned the position of “Prophethood” (nubuwwah), some of them were also assigned the position of “Messengerhood” (risālah).

“Prophethood” means that a person after receiving divine revelation teaches the truth to his addressees, and gives glad tidings of a good fate in the Hereafter to those who accept the truth and warns those among them who reject it that an evil fate awaits them. In the terminology of the Qur’ān, giving such glad tidings is called bashārah and giving such warnings is called indhār.

“Messengerhood” means that a prophet is assigned to his people such that he decides their fate through divine sanction so that if they reject him, he practically enforces the supremacy of the truth upon them by implementing on them God’s Judgement in this very world.

The way this established practice about Messengerhood manifests itself is that the Almighty selects His Messengers so that reward and punishment can be meted out in this world through them before the actual Day of Judgement. It becomes a miniature rehearsal of what is going to take place on that Day. These Messengers are
told that if they honour their covenant with God they will be rewarded in this very world and if they do not do so, they will be punished in this very world. The result is that the very existence of these Messengers becomes a sign of God, and it is as if their people can observe God walking on earth with these Messengers and delivering His verdicts. They are also directed to propagate the truth they have seen from the mind’s eye to the people and deliver with full certainty the very guidance of God the way they have received it from Him. In the terminology of the Qur’ān, this is called shahādah. Once this is established, it becomes a basis of the judgement of the Almighty both in this world and in that to come. Consequently, the Almighty grants dominance to these Messengers, and punishes those who reject the message presented by these Messengers.

This position of shahādah was bestowed, besides Messengers, upon the progeny of Abraham (sws) too. For this reason, the Qur’ān called them an intermediate group between God’s Messenger and His creation, and asserted that they have been chosen for this position just as the Almighty chooses some great personalities among mankind and grants them the status of a Prophet or a Messenger.

6. Purpose of Divine Books
    Generally, the Almighty has also revealed His books with Prophets and Messengers, and, according to the Qur’ān, the purpose of their revelation is to judge between what is right and what is wrong so that people can resolve their differences through them. In this manner, they are able to adhere to justice regarding the truth.
7. The Responsibility of Indhār

The chain of Prophets and Messengers began with Adam (sws) and ended on Muḥammad (sws). After his departure, divine revelation ceased and the institution of Prophethood was terminated. Consequently, the responsibility of indhār ie, to warn people to adhere to their religion now lies with the scholars of the ummah till the Day of Judgement.

8. Islam: The Name of this Religion

The religion introduced in the foregoing paragraphs is called “Islam”, and the Almighty has asserted in the Qur’ān that no other religion is acceptable to Him.

Just as the word “Islam” is used for the whole corpus of religion, it is also sometimes used to imply its outer form. As regards its outer form, it consists of the following five things:
1. Bearing witness that there is no god besides Allah and Muḥammad (sws) is His Messenger.
2. Offering the prayer
3. Paying zakāh
4. Keeping the fasts of Ramadān
5. Offering the ḥajj of the Baytullāh

9. Īmān: The Inner Aspect of Religion

The inner aspect of religion is “īmān” (belief). As per its details mentioned in the Qur’ān, this inner aspect also consists of five things:

i. Belief in God
ii. Belief in the Angels
iii. Belief in the Prophets
iv. Belief in Divine Books
v. Belief in the Day of Judgement

10. Permanent Requirements of Īmān

When this īmān, in its essence, enters the heart and receives its confirmation from it, then on the very basis of its presence requires two things:

i. Righteous Deeds (aʿmāl-i șāliḥ)

ii. Urging one another to the truth and urging one another to remain steadfast on it (tawāṣī bi al-ḥaqq wa tawāṣī bi al-ṣabr)

i. Righteous Deeds

All deeds which result once the morals of a person are purified are called righteous deeds. All their bases are found in human nature and intellect, and the sharīʿah of God has been revealed to guide mankind towards these righteous deeds.

ii. Urging one another to the truth and urging one another to remain steadfast on it

Urging one another to the truth and urging one another to remain steadfast on it relates to one’s immediate surroundings. This is an obvious requirement of accepting the truth and is also termed as amr bi al-maʿrūf and nahī ʿan al-munkar by the Qurʾān, implying the fact that a person should urge those in his surroundings to what is maʿrūf (good) according to human nature and intellect and forbid them from what is munkar (evil) according to it.

11. Contingent Requirements of Īmān

Described above are the requirements of faith in
ordinary circumstances. However, there are certain circumstances in which three other requirements can arise. They are:

i. Migration for the Cause of Religion (Hijrah)
ii. Supporting the Cause of Religion (Nuṣrah)
iii. Adhering to Justice (Qiyām bi al-Qist)

Their details follow:

i. Migration for the Cause of Religion (Hijrah)
   If it becomes difficult for a person to worship the Almighty, he is persecuted for his religious beliefs and it becomes impossible for him to live as a declared Muslim, then his faith requires him to shift to another place where he can openly practice his faith. In the terminology of the Qur’ān, this is called hijrah (migration), and a person who evades it when it becomes necessary, even after a prophet of God gives a call for it, has been promised the dreadful doom of Hell by the Almighty.

ii. Supporting the Cause of Religion (Nuṣrah)
   If there arise circumstances in which for the purpose of protection or dissemination of religion some action is required to be taken, it is a requirement of faith that one should present this support by offering his life and wealth for this purpose. In the terminology of the Qur’ān, this is called nuṣrah of the Almighty and it asserts that if at some time this requirement arises, a true believer should give it the foremost priority and nothing in this world should be dearer to him.
iii. Adhering to Justice (*Qiyām bi al-Qist*)

If emotions, vested-interests and biases try to divert a person from justice in some worldly or religious matter, his faith requires him not only to adhere to justice but also if his witness is required in these matters, he should do so even at the expense of his life. He should uphold the truth by saying what is the truth and surrendering before it. He should adhere to justice and bear witness to it, and stick to it in his beliefs and deeds. This is called *qiyām bi al-qist* (adhering to justice) by the Qur‘ān.

12. The Objective of Religion

The objective of this religion stated in the Qur‘ān is *tazkiyah* (purification). It means that the individual and collective lives of people should be purified and their beliefs and deeds be developed in the right direction. At many places in the Qur‘ān, it has been mentioned that the objective of mankind is to enter Paradise and only those people have been promised Paradise who have purified their souls. Therefore, it is *tazkiyah* which is the objective and purpose of religion. It is for this end that the prophets were sent and the whole religion was revealed to guide man in attaining this objective.

13. The Correct Religious Attitude

The correct attitude which the followers of this religion should adopt is called *iḥsān*. It means to do something in the best possible way. It manifests itself when a person worships the Almighty while considering himself to be standing before God because if he is not able to see Him, at least He is observing him.
Part I: *al-Ḥikmah*

I. Faith and Beliefs  
II. Morals and Morality
I. Faith and Beliefs

Imān (faith) is a religious term. If something is accepted with the certitude of the heart then this is called īmān. The foundation of this word is īmān (faith) in God. If a person accepts the Almighty such that he submits his heart and mind to Him to the utmost and is happy at all His decisions, then in the terminology of the Qur’ān, he is a mu’min (believer). It is this very essence of faith on account of which the Qur’ān demands from a person that besides substantiation from the heart, his words and deeds should also testify to it. Thus it calls every act of virtue emanating from īmān an essential quality of a believer.

No doubt, in the eyes of law every person who professes faith in Islam with his tongue is a mu’min. The extent of his faith can also not be ascertained as far as law is concerned; however, as far as true faith is concerned, it is never static. The faith of a person grows stronger when he remembers God and hears His revelations and witnesses His signs in the world within him and in that around him. The Qur’ān has compared faith to a tree whose roots are deep in the soil and branches spread in the vastness of the sky.

Same is the case of one’s faith growing weaker. Thus if a person instead of making it stronger through sound
knowledge and righteous deeds does acts which are against the requirements of faith, it grows weaker, and in some cases is totally wiped out.

It is evident from this that both faith and righteous deeds are essential to one another. Thus just as righteous deeds are necessary for faith, similarly faith is necessary for righteous deeds. At all places, the Qur’ān has stated this professing faith to be the very first condition for salvation.

This faith consists of the following five:
1. Belief in God
2. Belief in the Angels
3. Belief in the Prophets
4. Belief in Divine Books
5. Belief in the Day of Judgement

1. Belief in God

Allah is the name of the being Who is the Creator of the heavens and the earth and all other creations. Since the very beginning, this name has been specifically used for the Lord of this world. Before the advent of the Prophet (sws), in the times of Arab jāhiliyyah also this name was used for Him. This word was also one of the remnants of the religion of Abraham (sws) which the Arabs inherited.

An acknowledgement of the existence of God is found innately in man’s nature. The Qur’ān says that this matter manifested itself in the form of a pledge. It refers to this event as a real-life incident and not something metaphorical. Since man has been sent here for trial, the
whole incident has been erased from his memory; however, its essence is etched on his heart and ingrained in his soul and nothing can obliterate it. Consequently, if man is reminded of it in the absence of any hindrance in his surroundings, he leaps to it the way a child leaps to its mother even though it never saw itself emerge from her womb and is drawn towards her with such conviction as if it already knew her. A person feels that this pledge of his with the Almighty was the answer to a very natural need found within him. Once he found it, it was as if all the requisites and demands of his psyche were fulfilled. The Qur’ān says that this testimony of man’s inner-self is so undeniable that as far as the providence of God is considered, man will be held accountable before God merely on the basis of this testimony.

Besides this innate guidance, man has also been equipped with the ability of deriving conclusions from what he hears, sees and feels – conclusions which are actually beyond these faculties. A simple example to illustrate this is the law of gravitation. An apple falls on the ground. When a stone is to be lifted from ground, strength must be exerted. It is difficult to ascend stairs than to descend them. The moon and the stars move in the skies. Man has been witnessing all these phenomena for centuries until it was Newton who discovered that they are a result of the law of gravitation. This law itself cannot be observed; however it is accepted as a scientific reality in the whole world. The reason for this is that all theories and known facts are in harmony with it. All observable realities are explained by this law and as yet no other law is able to explain various phenomenon as it
This process obviously is the derivation of the tangible from the intangible. When a person makes use of this ability of his and studies the world around him, then this study of his also vouches for this very reality found in his inner-self.

Thus he sees that everything of this world is a miraculous manifestation of creativity; everything has deep meaningfulness; it has been created with great diligence and thoroughness; there exists amazing wisdom, planning, usefulness and order; there are found superb mathematical and geometrical realities whose only justification is the fact that they have a Creator and this Creator is not an uncontrolled and unrestrained being. On the contrary, He has an unfathomable mind. This is because if power does not emanate from a wise and all-knowing being, then it should be mere tyranny; the truth of the matter is that this is not so: this expression of power and strength has aptness about it; it is also very harmonious and is very advantageous and produces great marvels which cannot be produced by an uncontrolled and unrestrained force.

Although these testimonies were sufficient, however in order to leave people with no excuse in rejecting them the Almighty took a step further: He initiated mankind by a human being who directly heard from God, saw His angels and in this manner bore direct witness to the truth. The Almighty took this step so that after the death of Adam, the first human being, this information could be transmitted to the descendents of Adam generation after generation and so that the concept of God and the Hereafter should not become alien in any period of time,
in any place on the earth and in any generation of mankind.

Not only this, once Adam and Eve were sent to live in this world, the Almighty, for a considerable period of time, made a means for them to know and judge if their faith and deeds were acceptable to God or not. This was like making every person of that time directly experience and observe the truth so that he too could become among the witnesses along with his progenitors. The means adopted for this purpose was that people would offer sacrifice before God; then, as a sign of divine acceptance, fire would descend from the heavens to consume this sacrifice.

It is evident from this discussion that the existence of God is an obvious reality whose conception has been transmitted to man from his ancestors and whose testimony is borne by both matter and by life. However, who is this being? What are His attributes? What are the laws and practices He has set for Himself? These are the questions which necessarily arise in the mind of a person who wants to comprehend Allah. This comprehension is essential for faith. When the Qur’ān demanded from people to profess faith in God, it answered these questions. In the following pages, we will take a look at these answers:

i. Being

The Qur’ān has explicitly stated that no mind can comprehend the being of God. The reason for this is that the being who has created these means of comprehension can certainly comprehend human beings but these means are in no way able to comprehend Him
ii. Attributes

Contrary to the person of God, His attributes can be comprehended to some extent by a human being. The reason is that man himself finds some of these attributes within him, though at a very small scale. God has granted man some portion of His knowledge, power, providence, wisdom and mercy. Man can thus analogously have some idea of the attributes of God. Consequently, when the Qur’an says that He is al-Khâliq (the Creator), al-Qadîr (the powerful), al-Rahmân and al-Rahîm (the Gracious and the Ever-Merciful), al-‘Alîm and al-Ḥakîm (the Knower and the Wise), al-Awwal and al-Ākhir (the First and the Last), al-Zâhir and al-Bâṭîn (the Apparent and the Hidden), then we are able to have some concept of the attributes of God.

In understanding the attributes of God, the aspect of finesse in them however should always remain in consideration because power is praiseworthy only when it is complemented by mercy, affection and justice. If anger, revenge, rage and fury manifest against oppression and injustice then this is commendable too. Mercy, forgiveness and generosity are laudable in their right context. The mention of the attribute of ḥamîd (praiseworthy) with ḡanî (self-sufficient), ḥakîm (wise) with ‘alîm (knowledgeable) and ḡafîr (merciful) with ‘azîz (powerful) in the Qur’an guides us to this very aspect of finesse and poise.

Similarly, whatever conception of God one perceives, it cannot be devoid of majesty, splendour and perfection. Consequently, attributes such as al-Wâḥid (the only
one), al-Aḥad (the unique) and al-Ṣamad (the rock) depict perfection; the attributes of al-Qudūs (the holy), al-Salām (the one who is peace in entirety) and al-Mu’min (the peace-giver) are attributes of splendour and al-Malik (the king), al-ʿAzīz (the powerful) and al-Jabbār (the dominant) are attributes of majesty. The attributes of majesty produce fear, respect and praise in a person; the attributes of splendour produce praise and love for Him and instil hope in a person. The attributes of majesty are more apparent to his senses and the attributes of splendour are more apparent to his intellect and heart. If God is kept in consideration, the attributes of splendour appear more dominant and if a human soul is kept in consideration, the attributes of majesty appear dominant. Man while fearing God leaps towards Him for this very reason and tries to seek refuge in His attributes of splendour. When the Qur’ān says that all gracious names are His, it means that every name which depicts His majesty, splendour and perfection is gracious and He can be called by these names.

The greatness of the Almighty becomes evident from His attributes of perfection. When a person acquires the correct understanding of these attributes, he professes faith in a God Who is unique, peerless and only one of a kind; He is the rock of shelter for all; to Him solely belong the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them; no one shares His sovereignty and no one is His partner in running the affairs of this universe; there is nothing in this world which is hidden from Him; no affair of this world is beyond His jurisdiction and control; everything needs Him, but He needs no one; matter, plants and animals all prostrate before Him and
are busy in celebrating His praises and glorifying Him; His power is immense and He is all-embracing and every particle of this universe is subservient to His will; Whenever He wants, He can destroy any thing at any time and whenever He wants He can re-create it; it is He who bestows honour or humiliation; everything is mortal and He is the only immortal; He is beyond what is the beyond, yet He is closer to man than his life-vein; His knowledge and wisdom encompass everything; He even knows what is concealed in the hearts; His intention supersedes all intentions and His command supersedes all commands; He is free of all faults and is without any blemish and beyond any allegation.

Among the attributes of perfection, the attribute of *tawḥīd* occupies the most importance. It is this attribute of *tawḥīd* which is the most explained and emphasized upon by the Qur’ān. So much so, the *sūrah* on which the last group of the Qur’ān effectively ends directs the Prophet (sws) to declare the concept of *tawḥīd* openly before the people that God is alone; He is everyone’s support. He is neither anyone’s father nor anyone’s son; and there is none like Him.

It is this importance of *tawḥīd* on account of which the Qur’ān has explicitly stated that without adhering to it no deed of a person is acceptable and if a person adheres to it then there is hope that every sin may be forgiven. The reason for this is that a person cannot remain adamant on his sin if he professes faith in *tawḥīd*, and if he happens to sin, he will find that the grace and blessing of God will induce him to repent and to seek God’s forgiveness. Such a person will surely turn to God and as such become entitled to be forgiven even before the Day
of Judgement.

Arguments of *tawḥīd* which are cited by the Qur’ān are very sound and based on established facts derived from knowledge and reason. Here it should suffice to know that the argument which nullifies polytheism is that no one has any basis of associating partners with God. At more than one place, the Qur’ān has demanded from its addressees to present if they can any grounds for polytheism whether based on intellect or on divine sources. Only God Himself could have informed us if He had any associates and the only way to have knowledge of God’s will in this regard were the Divine books He revealed or the traditions and narratives which have been transferred generation after generation from his prophets and messengers. None of these contain anything which substantiates polytheism in any way.

### iii. Dealings and Practices

The dealings of God with His servants and the manner in which He deals with them are called *sunnatullāh* by the Qur’ān. The Almighty says that these practices are permanent and unalterable. Consequently, for a true comprehension of God, just as knowledge of His attributes is essential, knowledge of His dealings with His creation is also essential.

Following are the *sunan* (practices and dealings) of God:

#### a. Tests and Trials

God has created this world for test and trial. Every single person on this earth faces these trials and as such His practice of putting mankind through trials is a
universal phenomenon. Whatever is ingrained in human nature comes to surface because of these trials; the secrets of the inner personality of a person are revealed through these very trials and the levels attained by a person in his ideologies and in his deeds are ascertained through these very trials. The Qur’ān says that life and death have been created for the very purpose of judging that who among mankind adopts a rebellious attitude towards his Creator and who leads a life according to the liking of his Creator. No doubt, the Almighty has knowledge of everything; however, He has set the practice for Himself that He does not merely reward and punish people on the basis of His knowledge; on the contrary, He does so on the basis of their deeds. For this very purpose, He has implemented the system of trial on this earth.

The circumstances of sorrow and happiness, poverty and affluence, grief and joy which befall a person in this world are governed by this very practice of God. Through such circumstances, the Almighty tests His servants and differentiates the good among them from the evil. When He blesses someone with affluence and status, He tests whether such people will remain grateful to Him or not and when He afflicts someone with poverty and hardships, He tests whether such people will remain patient or not.

b. Guidance and Error

In this trial, man has been asked to guard himself from going astray and to consciously adopt the guided path. The Qur’ān has informed us that this guidance is found in the very nature of a person. Moreover, once a person attains the age of intellectual maturity, the signs of the
heavens and the earth around him direct his attention to this guidance. If a person values and treasures this guidance and benefits from it and is grateful to his Lord for it, it is the practice and law of God that He increases the glow of this guidance and creates in a person a further desire for this guidance and as a result of this induces in him the urge to benefit from the guidance brought by the prophets of God.

If a person decides upon evading this ingrained guidance, refuses to use his intellect, and deliberately deviates from the truth, then in the words of the Qur’ān this is *zulm* (wronging the soul) and *fisq* (defiance) and the Almighty never guides a person who continues to wrong his soul and persists in defiance and He leaves him to wander in the darkness of error and misguidance.

c. Beyond-Capacity Directives

In the *sharī‘ah* revealed through His Prophets, the Almighty never gives a directive to human beings which is beyond their capacity. In all that emanates from God for human beings, it is always made sure that they are not burdened beyond what they can bear and whatever directive be given is given keeping in view human capacity and capability. Consequently, a person will not be held liable for sins done out of forgetfulness or misunderstanding or done inadvertently, and God’s only requirement of man is that he should follow His directives in both letter and spirit with full veracity and honesty. However, this does not mean that if people adopt a rebellious behaviour, then too the Almighty does not burden them beyond their capacity. It is evident from the Qur’ān that for reprimand and training or for punishment
or to show them the consequences of their evil deeds or to make them aware of their helplessness against the power of God people are certainly burdened beyond their means.

d. Rise and Fall of Nations
Under the law of trial which has been mentioned earlier just as God selects people to make them undergo a trial of patience or of gratitude, in a similar manner He also selects nations for this purpose. As a result of this selection, when a nation once rises among the comity of nations the practice of God with it is that He keeps it on this position until it itself plunges into lowliness with regard to morality and knowledge. This is an unchangeable practice of God and when, after repeated warnings, He decides to humiliate and depose a nation no one can stop Him and no power of this world can help that nation against the Almighty. The whole history of mankind bears witness to this practice of God regarding the rise and fall of nations.

e. Divine Help
When the Almighty entrusts a person or a group with any of His missions and asks them to achieve it, then He also provides His help to them. This mission can relate to propagation of His message and it can also relate to jihād and warfare. The Almighty has held it mandatory on Himself to help the believers who have taken up such a mission. This help does not come randomly. It is based on a principle. This principle is mentioned in the Qurʾān and it is in accordance with this principle that people receive this help from Him.

f. Remorse and Repentance
If a person commits a sin, there exists a chance for him to repent. In this regard, the rule is that if people repent immediately after they commit a sin the Almighty definitely forgives them; however, He does not forgive people who deeply indulge in sin all their lives and when they see death approaching start to repent and seek forgiveness from the Almighty. Similarly, He also does not forgive people who deliberately deny the truth if they persist with this denial till death.

g. Reward and Punishment

In the Hereafter, reward and punishment is a certain reality; however, it is evident from the Qur’ān that at times this reward and punishment also takes place in this world. These lesser days of judgement are a prelude to the greater day of judgement which will take place in the Hereafter. The various forms of this reward and punishment which the Almighty has spelled out in the Qur’ān are:

Firstly, people who are only after this world, live and die for it and are absolutely indifferent to the Hereafter are given whatever worldly benefits the Almighty wants to give them and then their account is settled by Him in this very world and they are rewarded or punished on the basis of their deeds right in this world.

Secondly, those who reject their respective rasūl (messenger) even after being communicated the truth to the extent that they are left with no excuse to deny it are punished in this very world and those who profess faith in him, blessings of God embrace them from all sides.

Thirdly, the Almighty has promised the progeny of Abraham (sws) that if they adhere to the truth, they will
lead all nations of the world and if they deviate from it, they will be deposed from this position and will have to face the punishment of humiliation and subjugation.

2. Belief in the Angels

The beings through whom the Almighty sends down His directives for His creation are called angels. The Qur’ān uses the word َم‍التزاملا (al-malāʾikah) for them, which is a plural of the word َملاك (malak) that means “a messenger”. Consequently, it is evident from the Qur’ān that it is through the angels that communication between this world and the one beyond it is established, and the Almighty is running the affairs of this world through them. The way this is done is that whatever directive they receive from the Almighty is implemented by them as His obedient subordinates. Their own intention or exercise of authority is not involved in this process in any way. They are an embodiment of obedience and are busy all the time in glorifying Him and in celebrating His praises and never disobey Him in the slightest way.

3. Belief in the Prophets

People through whom the Almighty completed providing His guidance to mankind are called prophets. They were, in fact, human beings; however, the Almighty selected them for this purpose on the basis of His all embracing knowledge and wisdom. As such, prophethood is God-given and cannot be acquired through self-effort or training. It is evident from the
Qur’ān that only those people are chosen as prophets who are able to shield themselves from the lures of their inner-self as well as those of Satan, guard themselves against sin and are the righteous and pious among their people.

The Almighty sent these prophets to every community. He had promised Adam (sws) that He would guide his progeny through guidance revealed by Him. This guidance was given to mankind through these very prophets. After receiving revelations from God, they tell what the truth is to people, give glad tidings to those who believe in Him and warn those who do not believe in Him of a dreadful fate.

Prophets were not needed to make people recognize their Lord or give them a means to distinguish between good and evil. These facts are ingrained in their nature and innately found in them. Thus the need for prophets did not arise to inform man of these things; it arose because of two other reasons.

Firstly, for completion of guidance. This means that man be reminded of whatever is ingrained in his nature in concise form and of whatever he has known eternally and all its details be specified for him.

Secondly, for ītmām al-ḥujjah. This means to awaken man from his slumber of unawareness and after providing the testimony of his intellect and knowledge provide another testimony through these prophets to such an extent that no one is left with any excuse to deny the truth.

Through the prophethood of Muḥammad (sws) both these objectives have been achieved at the global level and accomplished to the utmost. Hence the institution of
prophethood was terminated. The Qur’ān declared him to be the last prophet. After him, no prophet or messenger shall come.

Every right-minded person has no difficulty in recognizing a prophet. If a person has a discerning mind and a vibrant heart, then the very person of a prophet is a miracle. However, besides this, the Almighty blesses a prophet with potent signs which though may not induce his adversaries to openly acknowledge him but are enough to leave them with no excuse to deny his veracity. It is evident from the Qur’ān that these signs are given to every prophet and their nature depends upon his times and circumstances. We shall mention a few of these in the following paragraphs:

i. A prophet generally comes in accordance with the prediction of the prophet who precedes him and comes as a fulfillment of this prediction. Viewed thus, he is not an un-introduced personality. People are familiar with him and also await him. It is known from the Bible that the Prophet John (sws) foretold the coming of Jesus (sws) all over Jerusalem. The predictions of the advent of Muḥammad (sws) are mentioned both in the Old and the New Testaments. One of the primary objectives of the advent of Jesus (sws) was to prophesy about the coming of an unlettered prophet in Arabia. The Qur’ān has presented as a conclusive proof of its own authenticity the fact that the scholars of the Israelites recognize the Qur’ān the way an estranged father recognizes his much awaited and promised son. This means that they also fully recognized Muḥammad (sws).

ii. Whatever a prophet presents as the word and message of God is without any contradiction and
inconsistency. Even the most ultimate of geniuses of this world like Socrates and Aristotle, Kant and Einstein, Ghālib and Iqบาล, Rāzī and Zamakhsharī cannot make such a claim about the works they have produced. However, the Qurʾān has vehemently asserted about itself that there is not a semblance of contradiction in the philosophy and ideology it presents and there is not the slightest evolution or development in its style that a person can detect. Is it possible that for years a person should give speeches on a variety of topics in different situations and circumstances and when these speeches are compiled from the beginning to the end they form such a harmonious and congruous discourse that it has no contradiction of views and does not reflect any effects of mood change of the speaker and also does not depict any revision or change of views? Only the Qurʾān has this characteristic.

iii. A prophet is blessed with miracles from God. The Qurʾān has specified that one of the reasons for which extra-ordinary miracles were given to Jesus (sws) and Moses (sws) was to authenticate them as messengers of God. No one can reject these miracles by pronouncing them as magic or trickery. The reason for this is that the reality behind such acts is very much known to those adept in such disciplines and they too are compelled to acknowledge such acts as miracles.

The miracle given to the Prophet (sws) to validate his prophethood is the Qurʾān. When those who are aware of the stylistic features of Arabic language and of its literary tradition and also have a literary appreciation of the language read the Qurʾān, they clearly feel that this could not have been produced by human beings. Thus, at
more than one instance, it has challenged its addressees who do not regard it to be of divine origin and regard it to be a fabrication of Muḥammad (sws) to produce just a single sūrah that can match the majestic style of the Qur’ān. If a person from amongst them in their own opinion can produce such a discourse without any literary and academic background, then they should also have no problem in doing so.

This Book of God is still with us. Fourteen centuries have passed ever since it was revealed. During this period, our world has undergone tremendous changes. Many ideologies and thoughts were presented by man only to be rejected by him later. Theories regarding man’s being and those regarding the universe around him were put forth every now and then. Each underwent a process of acceptance or rejection in various periods of time. His intellectual journey took him through various paths and destinations; however, this Book of God is the only book which is as unassailable and sound today as it was fourteen centuries ago regarding the various facts it presents and which have remained under academic discussion in the past few centuries. Knowledge and intellect helplessly acknowledged its superiority at that time the way they do today. Every statement it has given has stood the test of time. The world, in spite of its astounding scientific and academic discoveries, has failed to present a better alternative to the views it presents.

iv. The Almighty informs a prophet of certain unknown things which are impossible to come into the knowledge of any other human being. One example of this is the predictions made by divine revelations which were fulfilled to the utmost. Some of these predictions
are mentioned in the Qur’ān and some in the Ḥadīth narratives. Every student of the Qur’ān is aware of the predictions regarding the supremacy of the Prophet Muḥammad (sws) in Arabia, the conquest of Makkah and the people entering the folds of Islam in multitudes. Another great prediction made by the Qur’ān was the victory of the Romans after being defeated by the Persians.

When this prediction was made, then in the words of Edward Gibbon: “No prophecy could be more distant from its accomplishment, since the first twelve years of Heraclius announced the approaching dissolution of the empire.” However, it was fulfilled at the very time it was meant to and in March 628 AD the Roman emperor returned to Constantinople with such splendour that four elephants were pulling his chariot and numerous people stood outside the city with lanterns and branches of olive to welcome back their hero.

v. Prophets who are also designated as Messengers (rusul) are a symbol of divine justice in this world and decide the fate of their people in this very world. The way this is brought about is that if these Messengers abide by their covenant with God they are rewarded in this world and if they deviate from it they are punished in this world. The result is that the very existence of these Messengers becomes a sign of God and it is as if they witness God walking on earth with these Messengers and administering justice. It is this situation which becomes the basis of passing judgement by the

Almighty both in this world and in that to come. Consequently, the Almighty grants supremacy to these Messengers and punishes those who reject their message.

The Almighty has directed people to obey a prophet. He has made it very clear in His Book that a prophet is not merely to be revered, he is to be obeyed also. He is not sent that people merely regard him to be a prophet and then leave him aside; he is not merely one who counsels and preaches; he is a guide who must be obeyed. The very objective of his coming is that whatever guidance he provides in all affairs of life must be followed without any hesitation. Moreover, obeying a prophet is not merely a ritual. The Qur’ān requires from a believer to obey him with the spirit of following him and with full sincerity, full reverence and full devotion.

4. Belief in Divine Books

Just as the Almighty has sent prophets to guide mankind, similarly He has revealed His Books to these prophets for this purpose. The purpose of these Books is that people have with them the written guidance of God in His very words so that they can judge between what is right and what is wrong through these Books and are able to resolve their differences through them and in this manner they are able to adhere to justice regarding religion.

At this point of time, the anthology of books found in the Bible shows that apparently these Books were given to each and every prophet in some form or another. Just
as the Qur’ān mentions the Torah and the Gospel, it also refers to the scripture of Abraham (sws). All these Books are Books of God. Thus the Qur’ān requires of Muslims to broadly profess faith in these Books without any discrimination.

Out of these, however, four Books occupy exceptional importance: the Torah, the Psalms, the Gospel, the Qur’ān. The Torah was revealed to Moses (sws), the Psalms to David (sws) and the Gospel to Jesus (sws). The Qur’ān was revealed to Muḥammad (sws), the last prophet of God. In divine literature, this is the only Book about which it can be said with full certainty that it is present with us in its original form, shape, language and arrangement without the slightest bit of change.

5. Belief in the Hereafter

Belief in the Hereafter is one of the most important tenets of Islam. It occupies the central position in the preaching mission of prophets. It is on the foundation of this belief that the pillars of sharīʿah, virtue and righteousness stand. Prophethood is also based on it. A nabī (prophet) is a nabī because he actually foretells this nabāʾ azīm (great news).7 A rasūl (messenger) is a rasūl because he brings the message of its advent. The Qurʾān is a bearer of warning and glad tidings for this Day. It says that the manner in which people wake up from sleep, the manner in which rain enlivens a dead and desolate terrain, the manner in which a whole human being comes

7. This is a reference to the words of a Qurʾānic verse: 78:2.
into existence from a mere drop of water, in the same manner mankind will be made to rise one day from their graves. Raising up mankind on that Day would not be of any bother for the Almighty. When the addressers of the Qur’ān expressed their wonder on being re-created and inquired after the being who would enliven these decayed bones, the Almighty replied in the Qur’ān that the very being Who created them the first time would create them again. This whole process is as easy for Him as uttering a word for us is.

The testimonies, indications, sites and events of this day are described both in the Qur’ān and the Ḥadīth. In the following paragraphs, these details are mentioned:

i. The Testimonies

The first thing is man’s awareness of good and evil. It is because of this awareness that his chiding conscience rebukes him on every evil. It is a small court of justice which is found within every person which delivers its unbiased verdict at all times. Whether he accepts it or not, a person is able to clearly listen to this verdict after every blemish that emanates in his thoughts and deeds; this continues until he becomes so deeply involved in evil that this evil completely surrounds his faculties thereby lulling the calls of his conscience to sleep. This internal system of rebuke is a testimony of his own inner-self and is called the testimony of the rebuking-self. The Qur’ān presents it and tells man that he will not be left unaccountable for whatever he does. He should know that just as there exists a lesser abode of judgement within man, similarly a greater abode of judgement will one day be set up for the whole world;
when it takes place, he will be held accountable before his Lord and rewarded and punished accordingly on the basis of his deeds. If a person denies such a day of accountability, then it is like denying himself and playing mischief before one’s conscience.

The second thing is the nature of man by virtue of which he likes justice and dislikes injustice. No doubt, in spite of this dislike he still perpetrates injustice but this is not because he is not able to distinguish justice from injustice or that he likes the latter – it is because he loses his balance and poise by being overcome with desires and emotions. All of us know that a person may want to steal from another person’s house but he would never like someone to steal from his own house; he may kill someone but would never like that anyone take his life or that of his relatives. Similarly, a person may be dishonest in weighing his merchandise for others but would never be happy if others are dishonest with him in this regard. If one asks these thieves, killers and swindlers about their actions they would confess that each of these is a crime and should be eliminated. Thus no one in his senses can regard good and evil to be equal or that both be dealt with in the same manner. The Qur’ān presents these facts and asks the rejecters of the Day of Judgement: “Are We to deal with those who submit to Us as We deal with those who transgress? What is the matter with you? What is this judgement you give?”

The third thing is the incompleteness found both in man and in this world. From whatever aspect these two are seen, it is clearly evident that in every single part of theirs the great power and wisdom of their maker is apparent. In everything there is great meaningfulness, matchless order
and sequence, unrivalled mathematical perfection and symmetry, extra-ordinary thoroughness and immense beauty of creativity that astounds one’s intellect. On the other hand, if one tries to understand both of them in their totality, one sees great incompleteness and lack of purpose in them. After this, there can only be two possibilities: first, to regard this world as a meaningless place and come to the conclusion that it is the workmanship of a merry-maker and nothing more; second, to understand it in combination with a Day of Judgement and that eternal kingdom of God which has been so vehemently been affirmed and declared by His prophets. What is the verdict of intellect? Every person can comprehend.

The fourth thing is the attributes of God the effects of which are evident in every speck of this universe. The attributes of providence and mercy in particular need one’s attention. After witnessing the extra-ordinary arrangement made by the Lord of this world to nurture and nourish man, how can a person of intellect think that his Lord will leave him unaccountable and how can it be expected from the merciful and gracious God to not punish people who have made this world a place of oppression and injustice. For this very reason, the Qur’ân has pointed out at a number of places that the Day of Judgement is the consequence of God’s providence and mercy, power and wisdom. After professing belief in God, no one can deny it.

The fifth thing is the manifestation of God’s judgement in this very world. This happened through prophets who were elevated to the status of messengers. The Almighty blessed them with extra-ordinary
miracles, helped them through Gabriel and before the actual Day of Judgement set up through these messengers miniature Days of Judgement on this earth. The objective was to prove the existence of God and the Hereafter before the people in the very manner scientific facts are proven through empirical evidence in a laboratory. After this, obviously no one is left with an excuse before the Almighty to not accept the truth.

The methodology adopted for presenting this empirical evidence was that these messengers communicated the truth to their people and then declared that they will set up a court of justice for their people on behalf of the Almighty. The reward and punishment on the basis of one’s faith and deeds which they have been informed of will take place for their people in this very world. Just as physical laws are unalterable and manifest come what may, in the same manner, this moral law of God shall manifest itself before them once they are left with no excuse to deny the truth. Thus those among the people of these messengers who accept their calls shall attain salvation both in this world and in the next and shall be dominant on their adversaries. And those who reject these calls shall be humiliated and will receive divine punishment.

Whenever this prediction was made and about whichever people it was made, it was made in the most impossible and unbelievable of circumstances; however, it is an amazing historical reality that it came true whenever it was made and came true in such a manner that people in fact witnessed God administering justice and the heavens and the earth were filled with His majesty and grandeur.
The Qur’ān has informed us that the last time this miniature Day of Judgement took place was in the seventh century AD. This amazing event of human history occupies extra-ordinary significance because it took place in the light of known history. Thus the minutest of the details about it are preserved and all its phases are before us and anyone can witness them by turning the pages of history.

ii. The Signs
When will the Day of Judgement come? The Qur’ān has made it clear that no one except God has knowledge of this. Only He knows when it will come and He has not disclosed this matter even to any of His prophets and angels. However, the signs and portents which will signal its advent are mentioned in the Qur’ān and the Ḥadīth and also in previous divine scriptures. Some of these signs are very general and others are in the form of specific incidents and happenings. The signs of this first category are not mentioned in the Qur’ān. Only the Ḥadīth literature mentions them. Of the signs of the second category too, only one is mentioned in the Qur’ān: the onslaught of Gog and Magog. Therefore, this only is the certain sign. Other signs which are generally known in this regard are found in narratives which the scholars of Ḥadīth technically regard as sahih. Some of these signs have already manifested themselves and others, if their ascription towards the Prophet (sws) is correct, shall definitely manifest themselves in future.

iii. The Events
How would the Day of Judgement come about? The details of what will ensue at the advent of this day are
mentioned in the Qur’ān at a number of places. What will happen to the heavens and the earth and what will befall the sun and the moon, the planets and stars and what situation will be faced by the creatures of the earth and how will people emerge from their graves to gather around their Lord is all portrayed in the Qur’ān. A study of pre-Islamic Arabic literature shows that Arabs relished parables more than similes. The Qur’ān while taking this into account has portrayed the picture of the cataclysm that will take place on that day in such a graphic manner that the reader feels and sees all these events happening before him. The sequence of the events which will take place as per the Qur’ān is the following:

a. People would be deeply involved in their life-routine. Some would be on the way, some in the market, some in a meeting and some at their homes and no one would have the slightest inkling that this whole world is about to be disrupted when suddenly the trumpet will be blown and the upheaval of the Day of Judgement will take place. At various places, the Qur’ān has graphically depicted what will happen to the creatures of this earth when this commotion ensues. When after the first earthquake tremor the second tremor comes, the state of the earth will be much like a ship which is being swept by the tumultuous waves around it and whose inhabitants as a result will be trembling with fear with eyes horror-struck and they would be so overcome and stricken by the situation as if the horrific punishment of God has driven them mad.

b. It will be at this time when great disruption in the physical world will begin. Such great commotion will ensue all over this universe that mountains will be
crushed to grains, seas will burst forth and all galaxies and heavenly bodies will be displaced and will fuse into one another. So great will this all-embracing upheaval be that minds cannot imagine it and words cannot describe it. This turmoil will continue for a period known only to God.

c. After this, the second phase will begin. In the Qurʾān, this phase has been called the phase in which mankind will be re-created. Thus from this very turmoil a new physical world will emerge. All heavenly bodies including this earth, sun, moon and galaxies made of billions of stars and planets will change into an earth and heavens having new physical laws. According to the Qurʾān, at this juncture, the trumpet will be sounded once again after which mankind will rise from their graves and will advance to the court of justice set up by their Lord for them.

iv. Phases and Abodes

The phases through which a person passes and the abodes in which he is lodged during his journey to meet his Lord are also mentioned in the Qurʾān. Slowly but surely, he is moving to encounter his Lord. The first phase of this journey is death. After a short stay in this world, every single person passes through this phase. There is no escape from it. It can come in the morning and it can come in the evening; one may taste it even before one’s birth or right after birth. It can come in childhood, in youth or in old age at any time and every person has to submit to it whether he likes it or not. According to the Qurʾān at death, the real personality of a person which is called the soul (nafs) by the Qurʾān and which is
independent of his body is separated from his mortal being. A specific angel – who has a whole staff of angels – is deputed for this task. He formally comes and collects a person’s soul just as a government official entrusted for collecting something discharges his responsibility.

At this instance, what happens to a person is also depicted in the Qur’an. The souls of people who have deliberately rejected their prophets even after being convinced of their veracity are claimed by the angels whilst they hit and strike these disbelievers and at this very juncture of death they inform them that a terrible torment awaits them because of their evil deeds. On the other hand, people who profess faith in their prophets and are absolutely without any stain of disbelief or polytheism and have also not infringed upon the rights of others or been oppressive in any manner are presented with salutations from the angels and given glad tidings of Paradise.

After this, are the abodes which are called Barzakh, Mahshar, Hell and Heaven.

Barzakh is the boundary beyond which the dead shall be kept till the Day of Judgement. In some Ḥadīth narratives the word “grave” has been figuratively used for this world. Here mankind would be alive but this life would be without any corporal form. Here, the awareness of the soul, the nature of emotions, observations and experiences would be almost the same as the one found during dreams. It is evident from the Qur’an that for people whose fate is absolutely clear whether they are the righteous who have remained faithful to God and to their human beings in an exemplary way or are the haughty who have rejected the truth in sheer arrogance,
punishment and reward will begin in this world of Barzakh. The reason for this is that taking an account from them would not be required.

The next place people would encounter is the Mahšhar. The Qur’ān says that after the trumpet is sounded the second time all mankind will rise from their graves and stand in the Mahšhar. Each person will be given a body and a soul. The previous body of each person will be replaced with a new one which will be appropriate to endure God’s blessings as well His wrath; however, each person will have the same personality at that time as he had in this world.

Mankind on that day will be divided into three groups. The foremost in seeking the truth, the righteous and the wrongdoers. The first and second of these two groups will be given their record in their right hand whilst the hands of the third of these groups will be tied and they will be given their record from behind in their left hand. At this instance, the accounts of people shall be presented. Witnesses shall be called so that the wrongdoers are left with no excuse to deny their sins. Prophets of God shall also be presented as witnesses. Even the tongues, hands, feet, ears, eyes and skins of people shall bear witness. After this, judgement shall be pronounced and people shall be sent to Paradise or Hell.

Hell is the worst of abodes according to the Qur’ān. In it, there will be the punishment of the fire. This fire will scorch faces, disfigure looks, pluck out skins and reach the hearts. The necks of criminals will have yokes and their feet will be in chains; everything will become a yearning for them. The greatest punishment will be that sinners will not be able to see the Almighty nor receive
any affection from Him. The Almighty will not even like to look at some of them.

Paradise is the abode of the righteous. It is as vast as the universe. It is a place of eternal bliss where in contrast to this world, there is no concept of death with life, sorrow with happiness, worry with satisfaction, hardship with ease and torment with blessings. Its comfort is eternal, its bliss endless and its days and nights unending. Its peace is forever, its happiness will never cease and its majesty is everlasting and its perfection matchless. Here the Almighty will provide His servants with that which eyes have not seen, ears have not heard and which never has any person ever been able to imagine.
II. Morals and Morality

After faith, the second important requirement of religion is purification of morals. This means that a person should cleanse his attitude both towards his creator and towards his fellow human beings. This is what is termed as a righteous deed. All the *sharī‘ah* is its corollary. With the change and evolution in societies and civilizations, the *sharī‘ah* has indeed changed; however faith and righteous deeds, which are the foundations of religion, have not undergone any change. The Qur’ān is absolutely clear that any person who brings forth these two things before the Almighty on the Day of Judgement will be blessed with Paradise, which shall be his eternal abode.

The Qur’ān has also made it clear that just as the Almighty has blessed a person with eyes to see and ears to hear, similarly, he has blessed him with a faculty which distinguishes good and evil for him. A person is not mere body and intellect. He is also a moral being. This means that the ability to distinguish good from evil and the appreciation that good is good and evil is evil is innately found in him. This appreciation of good from evil is a universal reality. Thus when the most evil of persons does something wrong, he tries to hide it in the first phase. Same is the case with good. A person loves what is good and respects and reveres it. When he establishes a society, he always sets up a system of justice in it. This is ample
testimony of his innate ability to distinguish between good and evil. No doubt, at times, a person may justify a sin he commits, however, at the very time he invents excuses for this justification, he very well knows that he is inventing these excuses against his nature. The reason for this is that if someone else commits the same sin against him, he regards it to be an evil without any hesitation, and vehemently protests against that person.

However, in the interpretation of this innate ability to distinguish between good and evil, there could have been differences because of different circumstances and periods of time and because of a variation in perception between people themselves. It is a great blessing of the Almighty that He has not even left any possibility for such differences and wherever there could have been a likelihood of any major difference, He delineated good and evil through His messengers. The guidance provided by these messengers is now eternally enshrined in the Qur’ān. This guidance testifies to whatever a person finds within himself. Furthermore, man’s intuitive knowledge, in fact even his empirical knowledge, knowledge derived from natural and physical laws as well as knowledge derived from intellect all bear witness to it. Consequently, good and bad morals, as a result of this, can be fully ascertained.

1. Fundamental Principle

In this regard, the fundamental principle is that God enjoins justice, kindness and spending on the kindred, and forbids lewdness, evil and arrogance. All this is in
conformity with human nature and hence they have been acknowledged in divine religions. The ten commandments of the Torah are based on these and the Qur’ān too has actually explained them as part of its moral directives. An explanation of these follows.

The first thing is justice. This means that whatever obligation is imposed on a person viz a viz a fellow human, he discharges it the way it exactly is and in an impartial manner, whether his fellow human being is weak or powerful and whether he is liked or disliked by us.

The second thing is kindness (iḥsān). It is over and above justice and is the pinnacle of ethics and morality. It means that not only should a right be fulfilled, it should be fulfilled in a manner that a person is generous and considerate in this regard. A person should give more than what is due on him and should be happy to take what is less than his due. It is this attitude which develops in a society the values of love, sympathy, compassion, sacrifice, sincerity, gratitude and magnanimity. It is a result of these values that life becomes sweet and blessed.

The third thing mentioned is spending on the near ones. It is one of the most important corollaries of kindness and determines one of its specific forms. It means that the near ones are not merely worthy of justice and kindness from a person, they also deserve to be thought of as having a share in one’s wealth. They should never be abandoned in case of need and deprivation and like a person’s own family, their needs should also, as far as possible, be generously fulfilled.

In contrast, three things also are prohibited.

The first of these is lewdness. It connotes fornication,
homosexuality and similar acts of lewdness.

The second thing is evil. It refers to sins which mankind has generally recognized as sins, has always called them sins and so obvious is the evil in them that no argument is needed to prove it. In every good tradition of religion and culture, they are regarded as bad. At one instance, the Qur’ān, by using the word *munkar* and at another by using the word *ithm* for them, has clarified that they connote acts which are instrumental in usurping the rights of others.

The third thing is arrogance and rebelliousness. It means that a person takes undue advantage of his power and influence, exceeds his limits and tries to usurp the rights of others whether they are of his Creator or of his fellow human beings.

**2. Good and Bad Morals**

The Qur’ān has explained the brevity found in the basic principle stated above in a manner that what is morally sound and what is morally unsound is clearly ascertained. The section of verses in which they are mentioned begins with the prohibition of polytheism and also ends on its emphatic forbiddance. Such a style is adopted in the Qur’ān to highlight the importance of something. Here, the objective is to delineate the fact that it is the belief in monotheism which is like a boundary wall that encircles the directives of religion mentioned in these verses. If this boundary wall is damaged everything that lies within it is exposed to danger. No doubt, this is the supreme status of
monotheism which these verses mention. It is the
greatest and the most fundamental requisite of justice
which the Qur’ān directs its followers to dispense. For
this very reason, polytheism is called a great wrong
(ṣulmūn ʿazīmun). The Qur’ān has also clearly stated the
result of this great wrong: it is an unforgivable sin in the
eyes of God in retribution of which people shall be
humiliated and thrown into Hell.

What is polytheism? Associating other gods with God
Almighty is termed as polytheism (shirk) in the
terminology of the Qur’ān. It means:

a) to regard someone to have the same genre as that of
God or to regard God to have the same genre as someone;
or

b) to regard someone to have a role in creation or in
running the affairs of the creatures and in this manner
make someone God’s peer to some extent or another.

Examples of the first type of polytheism are the beliefs
of Christians and the Polytheists of Arabia about Jesus
(sws) and Mary (sws) and about the angels respectively.
The belief of wahdat al-wujūd of the mystics is another
example of this.

Examples of the second type are the beliefs regarding
Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva in Hinduism and the beliefs
regarding Ghaws, Quth, Abdāl, Dātā and Gharīb Nawāz
among Muslims. Belief in evil spirits and stars and in the
powers of Satan, also belong to this category of
polytheism.

The details of other directives which are mentioned in
this regard are as follows:
i. Worshipping God

The first directive is that since there is no god except God, only He should be worshipped. The essence of this worship (‘ibādah) is humility and servility, as has been indicated earlier. The foremost manifestation of this essence is serving the Almighty. Since a person also has a practical existence in this world, this servitude relates to this practical existence as well and in this manner becomes inclusive of obedience. The manifestations in the first case are glorifying Him and singing His praises, praying to him and supplicating before Him, kneeling and prostrating before Him, making vows (to please Him), offering animal sacrifice and doing iʿtikāf.

In the second case, a person, after regarding someone as an independent law giver and ruler, considers that He has the authority to give directives of what is forbidden and what is not and what is allowed and what is not and submits before all His directives. It is the verdict of God Almighty that none of the above mentioned things can be reserved for someone other than Him. Thus if a person glorifies someone and sings his praises or prays and supplicates before someone, kneels and prostrates before him or presents vows before him or offers animal sacrifice to him or does iʿtikāf for him or regards him to have the authority of prohibiting or allowing things, then this would mean that he has refused to accept this verdict of God.

ii. Treating Parents with Kindness

The second directive is that parents should be treated with kindness. This directive is present in all divine scriptures. There is no doubt in the fact that among human beings a person’s foremost obligation is towards
his parents. Thus after worshipping God, Muslims have been directed to fulfill it the foremost. The reason for this is that it is the parents who bring a person into existence and it is they who nourish and look after him. The Almighty has counseled man to be thankful to both his parents the foremost after God. This gratitude is not to be expressed merely through the tongue. There are some essential requisites of this gratitude which the Qur’ān has related.

The first thing mentioned is that a person should treat his parents in a manner that he shows respect to them not only outwardly but also from the depth of his heart. He should not show any aversion to them in his heart and also not say something before them which is against manners. In fact, he should treat them with love, affection and decency and in a manner that reflects his obedience to them. He should obey them and in the frailty of old age, comfort them and be a means of re-assurance to them.

The second thing mentioned in this verse is that a person should always show obedience and compliance to his parents and this obedience should arise from his love and affection for them. Just as parents hide and protect their children the way birds do through their wings, in a similar manner, children too should hide and protect their elderly parents in their wings of love and obedience. The reason is that if ever children can repay their parents for their care it is through this attitude. Without this attitude, this right of the parents can in no way be fulfilled.

The third thing that is mentioned besides the above behaviour is that a person should keep praying for his parents that the way his parents raised him with affection
and care, the Almighty should also shower His blessings on them in this old age. This prayer is a right of the parents on their children and it is also a reminder for a person to fulfill this right imposed on him. This prayer is also the motive for the feelings of love which the Almighty has demanded from the children in treating their parents with kindness.

In relationships which develop with other people besides the parents, a person should have this same attitude in proportion to their closeness to him. Thus the Almighty has also counseled a person to treat his relatives, the orphan and the destitute, his neighbours, the traveler and his subordinates with kindness.

iii. Spending in Way of God

The third directive is to spend in the way of God. This means that just as a person spends on himself the blessings bestowed upon him by God, he should also spend them on his fellow brethren after fulfilling his personal and business needs. It is evident from the Qur’ān that two things are required for a person if he is to become a true servant of God: Firstly, his relationship with God should be established on right footings. Secondly, his relationship with other human beings should also be established on right footings. The first thing is achieved through the prayer which is the foremost expression of one’s love for God, and the second through spending in the way of God for this is the foremost expression of one’s love for one’s fellow human beings. The reward for this spending is also God’s love because whatever one spends he has it saved in the heavens and in the words of the Prophet Jesus
(sws), his heart too remains occupied at this place, (Matthew, 6:19-21).

This spending in the way of God is the right of one’s relatives, orphans and the needy which must necessarily be fulfilled. Any slackness in fulfilling this right can, in the eyes of God, make a person a criminal who extorts the rights of people. Thus, at another instance, the Qur’ān has clearly stated that if a person starts amassing wealth while remaining indifferent to these rights then this is hoarding and its punishment is the fire of Hell – from which every believer should seek refuge with the Almighty.

Only people who adopt a balanced attitude in their spending and consider the sustenance they have been given by God a blessing and not a result of their own planning are afforded with the urge and will to spend in this manner. Consequently, two further things are stated:

Firstly, wealth should not be squandered for it is a blessing of God and the right attitude in this regard is that a person should spend it in a balanced and efficient way on his permissible needs and whatever he saves he should consider that he has been entrusted with it as a share for its rightful recipients and with full caution discharge this duty of handing it over to them. The reason for this is that a person who does not adopt a balanced attitude regarding his needs is not able to even find time from his pastimes and pursuits to fulfill such duties regarding others. The Qur’ān says that people who squander their wealth are Satan’s brothers and Satan is very ungrateful to his Lord. He allures people to his ways and entices them to spend on things which earn the displeasure of God. While explaining the balanced attitude in this matter, the Qur’ān says that a person should neither be miserly nor prodigal
so that when he needs his wealth, he ends up yearning for wealth and is reduced to indigence; on the contrary, he should spend in a balanced way and always save something so that he is able to help others whenever needed.

Secondly, it is the wisdom and will of God which governs the financial circumstances of a person. The only responsibility of a person is that he should work hard to create opportunities for his livelihood. People who do not understand this, not only do not spend on others, but many a time become so callous as to even kill their children for fear of poverty. The Qur’ānic verses which mention the directives of spending in the way of God, at one place, specially allude to the evil Arab custom of burying alive infant girls in the time of jāhiliyyah. The psyche behind this was that since a woman is not an earning member of the family, why should one bear the burden of her up-bringing. The Qur’ān forbade this heinous practice and said that it is the Almighty who provides for these innocent girls and also for those who indulge in this practice. They should rest assured that the Almighty is ever-watching the circumstances His servants are going through; He is not un-aware of them.

iv. Chastity and Modesty

The fourth directive mentioned is that no one should even go near fornication. The reason stated for this is that it is open lewdness and a very dreadful practice. The implication is that no argument is required to prove its awfulness and lewdness. Human nature, unless it is perverted, has always regarded it to be a grave sin and a terrible crime. It is an indubitable reality that the
institution of family is as essential a need for a person as air and water are. This institution can sustain on natural feelings and emotions only if the relationship between the spouses is permanent. If this aspect is missing then a society can only consist of a bunch of animals which are devoid of natural and spiritual feelings and emotions; it cannot be founded on right and healthy footings. It is this very terrible nature of fornication because of which the Almighty has not merely forbidden it; He has said to not even go near it. This means that one should keep away from things that may lead to it or may ultimately entice a person to it. The etiquette of gender interaction mentioned in the Qur’ān is stated for these very reasons. A summary of this etiquette is that men and women with regard to their physical and psychological needs should guard their gazes and properly cover their private parts and should not do anything that rouses sexual emotions. The reason for this is that when Satan wants to give currency to fornication in a society, he first of all begins from these places. It is evident from the Qur’ān that it was through this very way that he had attacked Adam and Eve. On this very basis, popularizing fornication and creating opportunities which lead to it are regarded a crime by the Almighty.

v. Sanctity of Human Life

The fifth directive is that no one should kill any one. This is a mention of the sanctity of human life which it always possessed as per morality and religion. The Qur’ān has informed us that prior to this, the Israelites were also given this directive and the Almighty had ordained that killing one human being was like killing
whole mankind.

The Qur’ān has also clarified that the perpetrators of this crime will not only have to face God, they will also have to reckon with the heirs of the slain person and God has given them full authority in this regard, and no court of justice can show any leniency to the murderer without the consent of his heirs. Its responsibility is that if they insist on qīṣāṣ, it should help them and should implement with full force whatever they want.

vi. Misappropriating the Wealth of Orphans

The sixth directive is that the wealth of orphans should not be misappropriated. The words of this directive are the same as those of fornication earlier: “Do not approach the wealth of orphans except for their welfare and betterment.” The implication is that one should only use the wealth of the orphans for their development and protection and this too should be done till the time when orphans reach maturity and can be entrusted with their wealth.

vii. Keeping Promises

The seventh directive is that promises should be kept at all costs. The Qur’ān here says that one shall be held accountable for promises. At some other instances in the Qur’ān as well, this directive of keeping promises is mentioned with the same emphasis. At the time of armed jihād also, the most important directive which is stated in the Qur’ān is this keeping of promises. At one instance, the Prophet (sws) and the Muslims have been directed to end their treaties with the Idolaters of Arabia and launch the final onslaught. However, this much has been clearly stated in it that treaties which are time-
bound must be honoured till the time period expires. At another instance, it has been stated that if a nation with whom Muslims are bound in a pact is oppressing the Muslims, then these Muslims cannot be helped in breach of this pact.

viii. Honesty in Weighing

The eighth directive is that things should be weighed and measured with honesty. The Almighty says that He has set the earth and the heavens on a scale and thus it is necessary that a person in his circle should remain just and measure with the right scale and weights. It is evident from this that this is a very important directive and in its essence is actually a corollary of the scale of justice on which this world has been created. Thus if anyone deviates from it, it means that his conception of justice and fairness has become defective and he actually does not believe in a just God. After this, obviously the economic and social systems of the society are shaken from their bases and no ingredient of the society remains in its place.

Adulteration in things is also a similar case. If a person mixes water in milk, or sand in sugar or barley in wheat, he commits the same crime because even if he weighs accurately he is not giving the buyer in full what he is buying. This is like usurping the rights of others for which he will have to face grave consequences both in this world and in that to come. Thus the Qur’ān has said: “give full measure, when you measure, and weigh with correct scales. This is better and fairer as far as the consequences are concerned.”
ix. Following Speculations

The ninth directive is that one should not base one’s actions on speculations. The Qur’ān has warned us from regarding this to be a trivial directive because the faculties of sight, hearing and intellect shall one day be held accountable before God. The implication of this directive is that it is not right for a Muslim to make bad estimations about other Muslims, or make allegations against others or take some action against others without proper knowledge of what the matter is or spread rumours merely on the basis of speculation or form a view about God’s being and attributes and His directives merely on the basis of conjecture and guesswork and unending analogies.

x. Pride and Vanity

The tenth directive is that no one should walk with pride and vanity on God’s earth because this is the gait of the conceited. The Qur’ān thus says that howsoever much a person may strike the earth with his feet, he will not be able to rent it asunder and howsoever much a person may walk while raising his head he will not be able to reach the heights of the mountains.

Such a gait obviously reflects one’s inner-self. Wealth, authority, beauty, knowledge, power and other similar things produce pride and vanity in a person. Each of these produces a specific type of pride in one’s gait showing that his heart is devoid of the perception of serving God and there is no concept in it of God’s glory and greatness. The heart which has the perception of serving God and of His greatness only beats in the chests of people who have humility. Instead of walking arrogantly, they walk with their heads bent.
Here it should remain clear that pride and vanity are not merely reflected in one’s gait: they are evident in one’s conversation, clothes, appearance and behaviour as well. Hence the use of all such things should be regarded as prohibited which reflect affluence or are a means of show and pomposity or are instrumental in overawing others or belong to the mannerisms of rogues and ruffians. So much so, one should not adopt an arrogant appearance in keeping the beard and the moustache and in wearing clothes.

Moreover, this mental state becomes a source of great sins. Consequently, it is this conceit and arrogance which is instrumental in deliberately denying the truth, in considering oneself superior to others on the basis of colour, creed and race, in considering others to be inferior and making fun of them, in censuring others, in calling them with bad names and in scandalizing the faults of others in their absence. God has strictly forbidden all these.

Like the ten commandments of the Torah, these are the ten commandments of the Qur’ān. All morals are their corollary. What the Almighty has regarded as great sins and acts of vulgarity emerge from disobeying these directives. The Qur’ān unequivocally states that people can be punished for this disobedience in the Hereafter. Thus every Muslim should remain cautious about it. The following three things should remain in consideration in this regard:

Firstly, if the disobedience is unintentional, God will not hold a person accountable. His law is that if a person unintentionally commits something which apparently is a misdeed, however, he had no intention of committing
that misdeed, the Almighty will not punish him.

Secondly, if a person is able to abstain from disobeying these directives, then its reward is that his minor sins will be forgiven by the Merciful Lord otherwise all his major and minor sins will be recorded in the register of his deeds and he will have to give their account.

Thirdly, if a person disobeys any of these directives while being overwhelmed with emotions, he should repent and mend his ways. It is essential that he repent as soon as possible. The Almighty has clearly stated in the Qur’ān that He will forgive people who commit a sin while being overwhelmed with emotions if they repent right after it. He will not forgive people who sin all their lives and repent when they see death approaching. Similarly, He will not forgive people who deliberately reject the truth if they continue with this attitude till their death.

The Qur’ān has ascertained two cases in which repentance shall be accepted by the Almighty. After this, one case remains: a person was not able to repent right after his sin; however, he did not delay repentance till his death. In this case, the Qur’ān is silent. This silence creates hope as well as fear and the purport of the Qur’ān also seems that one should remain between the states of hope and fear in this case. It is such people who would hopefully attain salvation through the intercession of the Prophet (sws).

3. Pinnacle of Morality

When a person reaches the pinnacle of morality with regard to his Creator and his fellow human beings the
qualities which emerge in him are also stated at one place in the Qur’ān by the Almighty. These are ten qualities and in the whole of its corpus, the Qur’ān has not added to this list. They reflect the pinnacle of religion. It urges its followers to try to engender these qualities in themselves.

Here are the details of these qualities:

i. Islām

The first quality is islām (showing submission to God). When this word is mentioned right after īmān the way it is here, then it signifies the external form of islām, ie. the directives which relate to the deeds and words and the physical entity of a person. Thus if the tongue of a person is willing to speak and abstain from speaking at the behest of God and His Prophet (sws); if his ears are ready to hear and stop hearing at their bidding, if his hands are prepared to strike and restrain themselves at their command and if his feet are keen to walk and stop at their directive, then this is nothing but islām. It is evident from the Qur’ān that the best examples of islām are the Prophets themselves. Thus we have been directed to follow them to reach this position of submitting to God and being content and happy with His decisions.

ii. Īmān

The second quality is having īmān (faith). This is the inner aspect of religion and here it implies the full faith one has about the promises of God together with His true cognizance. Thus a person who believes in God in such a manner that he submits himself totally to Him and is satisfied over His decisions in the utmost manner, then such a person is called a mu‘min (true believer). It is through īmān that hearts are purified, intellect receives
guidance and intentions are cleansed. It is this faith which affects both one’s ideologies and one’s deeds simultaneously and embraces one’s whole being. Then with the remembrance of God, with reciting His revelations and with the manifestation of His signs in the world inside a person and that outside, his faith grows. It is this faith whose requirement mentioned in the Qur’ān is that nothing in this world should be dearer to a true believer than the Almighty and His Prophet (sws).

iii. Humbling Oneself before God

The third quality is humbling oneself before God. This is an inner expression of a person which sets a person forever at the obedience of his Lord with full sincerity and dedication. This is the most prominent manifestation of the relationship between the Lord and His worshippers in the inner-self of a believer. Those who humble themselves before God are people who always serve God and in no circumstances become rebellious against their Lord. Sorrow, happiness, vivacity, exuberance and moments of bliss or grief do not swerve them from obedience. Even sexual impulses, strong desires and onslaughts of emotions do not make them stumble before their Lord. Their hearts acknowledge His grandeur and greatness and they consider the sharī‘ah a set of divine directives given by God to them in His very presence and can’t even think of evading what is given in this manner. A little deliberation shows that this is the very state of this entire universe and all its inhabitants.

iv. Veracity

The fourth quality is veracity. It means that a person’s intention, words and deeds are upright and in harmony
with one another. A person should not utter a single word which is untrue, his deeds should not contradict his words and if he adheres to every word he gives, then this is the veracity of his words and deeds; however, this should necessarily be supplemented with the veracity of his intentions. The Qur’ân has termed hypocrisy as its antithesis and at various places clarified that to God real deeds are those which spring forth from within a person; thus the pinnacle of veracity is achieved through this harmony of words and deeds and intention.

v. Patience

The fifth quality is patience. Its primary meaning is to restrain oneself from restlessness and anxiety. Later, the meaning of showing perseverance and resolve in one’s stance while encountering hardships and hindrances was incorporated into it. It is not something akin to weakness and frailty that a person is forced to adopt when he is helpless and weak; on the contrary, it is the fountainhead of determination and resolve and the pinnacle of human character. It is because of patience that a person becomes internally strong and instead of complaining about the dreadful experiences of life, welcomes them accepting them whole-heartedly and considers them to be from God, is never worried if his efforts are not bearing fruit, is not restless and uneasy, is not revengeful even against those who harm him, is steadfast in defending the truth even if death stares at him, exercises restraint both in times of joy and sorrow and all his life diligently discharges what he thinks to be his obligation.

It is this aspect of human character because of which the relationship of tawakkul (trust) is established between him
and his Creator and, in all circumstances, he trusts Him. The Qur’ānic words (2:155) express this very trust and submission. The Qur’ān says that those who abide by these words all their life and die on them will be rewarded with special favours from their Lord.

vi. Khushū‘ (Humility)

The sixth quality is khushū‘. The humility and servility which is engendered in a person as a result of comprehending the awe, grandeur and majesty of God is called khushū‘ by the Qur’ān. This is an internal feeling of a person which makes him submit himself before God and also produces in him the feelings of mercy and love for other human beings.

In the first case, its best manifestation is the prayer, especially the tahajjud prayer when a believer communicates with the Almighty while being cut off from the world, and nothing except the remembrance of God and gratitude to Him fill his secluded moments.

In the second case, this feeling effects the whole personality of a believer and makes him an embodiment of affection for his family and very caring and sympathetic towards his friends, neighbours and acquaintances and a fountainhead of guidance for the society. Consequently, it is because of such kind, humane and benevolent people that comes into being a society which is a paradise of God on earth and the objective and desire of every upright person.

vii. Charity

The seventh quality is being charitable. One level of spending in the way of God is that one should pay the
obligatory zakāh from his wealth. A higher level is that he considers whatever wealth remains with him after spending on his personal and business needs to be the right of the society and whenever he sees a need, he whole-heartedly offers his help. The third and the highest level in this regard is that he fulfills the needs of others while sacrificing his own needs and ignoring his own desires. The words “those who give in charity” can be used for all these three levels. However, when enumerating the qualities of a person, he is called so, it would primarily refer to the highest level mentioned above. In other words, this quality in a person means that he is a generous and large-hearted person who is always on the look out to spend in the way of God. This actually is a manifestation of the previously mentioned khusū‘ – this time in relation to human beings. It was for this reason that the prayer and spending in the way of God are generally mentioned adjacently in the Qur’ān.

viii. The Fast

The eighth quality is keeping the fast. It specifically targets disciplining the soul and nurturing patience. The Qur’ān says that its objective is to attain piety (taqwā). Thus when the words al-ṣā‘īmīn (those who fast) are used while enumerating the qualities of a person, it will refer to people who have such a strong desire to become pious that they fast as much as they can to attain it. It follows from this that these people are the ones who abstain from evil, desist from vulgarity and their life is an embodiment of the highest of morals.

ix. Guarding the Private Parts (ḥifẓ-i furūj)

The ninth quality is guarding the private parts (ḥifẓ-i
furūj). This is a consequence of disciplining the soul and of piety. This expression which refers to people who refrain from nudity, lewdness and vulgarity also occurs in many other verses of the Qurʾān. The implication is that they guard their chastity and modesty to the utmost. Thus except at instances they are allowed to reveal themselves, they never do so whether in private or in public. They also do not wear clothes which reveal body parts that have sexual attraction in any manner for the opposite gender. It is this extent of abstaining from vulgarity that produces a society in which chastity reigns supreme and men and women instead of trying to reveal their bodies are anxious to conceal them as much as they can.

x. Remembering God in Abundance

The tenth quality is remembering God in abundance. When the thought of his Lord takes firm ground in the heart of a person, he does not consider it enough to merely worship his God at the specified times of the day; he constantly tries to remember God at all times. When he sees a sign of God, his tongue spontaneously utters the words ﷽(glory be to Allah). He begins all his tasks and routines by saying ﷽ (in the name of Allah). When he receives a favour from his Lord, he expresses his gratitude by the words ﷽ (gratitude is for Allah). He never expresses his intention for something without uttering the words ﷽ (if Allah wills) and ﷽ (what Allah wills). He seeks God’s help in all his affairs. He asks Him for His mercy on every calamity that befalls him. He turns to Him in every hardship. He remembers God before going to sleep and begins his day by taking His name. In short, at all instances and at all moments, he
is constantly in contact with his Lord. Not only this; when he prays, he remembers God; when he fasts, he remembers God; when he recites the Qur’ān, he remembers God, when he spends on the poor, he remembers God; when he abstains from sin, he remembers God; when he falls in sin, he remembers God and becomes anxious to seek forgiveness from Him; one form of this remembrance is reflection: when we look at the world created by God, we see an astounding variety in the countless creatures He has created; we see the astounding products of human intellect around us; we see stormy seas and flowing rivers, lush green vegetation, abundant rain and the sequence of days and nights. We witness the outcome of winds and clouds. We also see how the heavens and the earth have been made and the astonishing way in which they are built; their benefits and uses for us are also apparent to us; they have a purpose and meaning to them; then we have the signs of God that are found not only in the world around us but also in the world within us; every now and then these signs appear in new and more enchanting forms. When a believer reflects on these signs of God, his heart and mind are filled with the remembrance of God. Consequently, he spontaneously declares: God! You have not made this world without a purpose; it is against Your knowledge and stature to do something meaningless and purposeless; I know this world will definitely culminate in a day of judgement in which people would be punished who spent their lives thinking that the world had been created by a merry-maker for merry making; I seek refuge with you from their fate.
Part II: *al-Kitāb*

I. The *Sharī‘ah* of Worship Rituals  
II. The Social *Sharī‘ah*  
III. The Political *Sharī‘ah*  
IV. The Economic *Sharī‘ah*  
V. The *Sharī‘ah* of Preaching  
VI. The *Sharī‘ah* of *Jihād*  
VII. The Penal *Sharī‘ah*  
VIII. The Dietary *Sharī‘ah*  
IX. Islamic Customs and Etiquette  
X. Oaths and Atonements
I. The *Sharī‘ah* of Worship Rituals

The objective of Islam is purification of the soul. Attainment of excellence in this purification relies on a person’s relationship of servitude with the Almighty. The stronger this relationship, the greater a person is able to achieve purification both in his concepts and in his deeds. Love, fear, sincerity, faithfulness and gratitude as an acknowledgement of His innumerable favors and blessings are the inner manifestations of this relationship. In the life of a person, this relationship manifests in the form of the following three: worship, obedience and support. In the religion of the Prophets, worship rituals are prescribed to serve as a reminder for this relationship. Prayer, zakāh, ‘umrah and animal sacrifice are worship, the rituals of Fasting and *iʿtikāf* are a symbolic expression for obedience, while the ritual of *hajj* is a symbolic expression for offering support and help for the cause of Allah.

1. The Prayer

The most important worship ritual of Islam is the prayer. A little deliberation shows that the essence of religion is comprehension of God and, with emotions of fear and love, an expression of humility and humility before Him. The most prominent expression of this
essence is worship. Invoking and glorifying Him, praising and thanking Him and kneeling and prostrating before Him are the practical manifestations of worship. The prayer is nothing but an expression of these manifestations and, with graceful poise, combines all of them.

The prayer occupies extra-ordinary importance in religion. The status monotheism occupies in beliefs is exactly the same as what the prayer occupies in deeds. It has been made mandatory to ingrain the remembrance of God in a person. It is evident from the Qur’ān that the prayer is the foremost consequence of the comprehension of Allah which one gets after being reminded by His revelations and, as a result of this comprehension, of the emotions of love and gratitude that appear for the Almighty or should appear in a person. It is the pillar of Islam and is among the requisites for a person to be called a Muslim both in this world and in the Hereafter. It is a means to remain steadfast on Islam, a vehicle for countering hardships and wipes out sins. It is the identity of true preaching, a means of perseverance on the truth and the nature of every object of this universe and is real life. When the comprehension of God, His remembrance and memory and the feeling of His nearness reach their pinnacle, it becomes the prayer. All the sages of the world are unanimous that real life is the life of the soul and this life is nothing but the remembrance of God, His cognizance and attaining His nearness. Only the prayer can furnish and afford such a life to man.

i. History of the Prayer

The history of the prayer is as old as religion itself. The
The concept of prayer is present in every religion and its rituals and timings are also identifiable in these religions. The hymns sung by the Hindus, the chants of the Zoroastrians, the invocations of the Christians and the psalms of the Jews are all its remnants. The Qur’ān has informed us that all the Prophets of God have directed their followers to offer it. It also occupies the most prominent position in the religion of the Prophet Abraham (sws) which the Prophet Muhammad (sws) revived in Arabia. When the Qur’ān directed people to pray, it was nothing unknown to them. They were fully aware of its pre-requisites and etiquette, rituals and utterances. Consequently, it was not required that the Qur’ān mention its details. Just as it used to be offered as a practice of Abraham’s religion, the Prophet (sws) at the behest of the Qur’ān promulgated it with certain changes among his followers, and after that they are offering it generation after generation in the same manner.

**ii. Pre-Requisites of the Prayer**

Following are the pre-requisites of the prayer:

a. A person must not be in a state of inebriation.

b. A woman should not be in the state of menstruation or puerperal discharge.

d. A person must have done the ceremonial ablution (wudū) and in case of *janābah* or menstruation or puerperal discharge must have taken the ceremonial bath.

e. In case of being on a journey or being sick or in case

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8. A state that a person is in after sexual intercourse, or a seminal/ovular discharge.
of non-availability of water, a person can offer the 
tayammum (dry ablution) if it becomes difficult for him 
to do the ceremonial ablution and the ceremonial bath.
    f. A person must face the qiblah.

The method of doing wudū is that first the face shall be 
washed and then hands up to the elbows shall be washed 
and after that the whole of the head shall be wiped and 
and after that the feet shall be washed.

Once wudū is done, it remains intact as long as 
something which terminates it is not encountered. 
Consequently, the directive of wudū is for the state in 
which it no longer remains intact except if a person does 
wudū#m spite of being in the state of wudū for the sake 
of freshness.

Following are the things which terminate wudū:
    a. urination,
    b. defecation,
    c. passing the wind whether with sound or without it, and
    d. pre-seminal discharge and pre-ovular discharge.

If, in the case of a journey, sickness or unavailability of 
water, wudū and the ceremonial bath become difficult, 
the Almighty has allowed the believers to do tayammum 
(dry ablution). It is done in the following way: hands 
should be rubbed on a clean surface and wiped over the 
face and hands. It suffices for all type of impurities. It 
can thus be done both after things that terminate the 
wudū and after having sexual intercourse with the wife 
in place of the ceremonial bath. Moreover, in case of 
being on a journey or being sick, tayammum can be done 
even if water is available.

Tayammum, no doubt, does not clean a person;
however, a little deliberation shows that it serves as a reminder of the real means of achieving cleanliness and as such has special importance. The temperament of the *sharī‘ah* is that if a directive cannot be followed in its original form or it becomes very difficult to follow it, then lesser forms should be adopted to serve as its reminder. One big benefit of this is that once circumstances return to normal, one becomes inclined to follow the directive in its original form.

### iii. Practices of the Prayer

Following are the practices of the prayer which are laid down in the *sharī‘ah*:

The prayer should begin with *raf‘ al-yadayn* (raising high both hands);
- *qiyām* (standing upright) should ensue;
  - it should be followed by the *rukū‘* (kneeling down);
- *qawmah* (standing up after the *rukū‘*) should then be done;
  - two consecutive prostrations should then follow;
  - in the second and last *rak‘at* of each prayer, a person should do *qa‘dah* (to sit with legs folded backwards);
  - when a person intends to end the prayer, he can do so by turning his face.

### iv. Utterances of the Prayer

Following are the various utterances of the prayer:

The prayer shall begin by saying *‘Ala‘ika ūllah* (God is the greatest);

Then Sūrah Fātiḥah shall be recited during the *qiyām*, after which, according to one’s convenience, a portion from the rest of the Qur’ān shall be recited;
While going into the *rukū‘*, Ābū ā shall be pronounced; while rising from the *rukū‘*, ‘Allāh (God heard him who expressed his gratitude to Him) shall be uttered; while going for the prostrations and rising from them, Ābū ā shall be pronounced; while rising from the *qa‘dah* for the *qiyyām*, Ābū ā shall once again be pronounced; at the end of the prayer, ‘Allāh, Ābū ā shall always be said loudly. In the first two *rak‘āt* of the *maghrib* and ‘ishā prayers, and in both *rak‘āt* of the *fajr*, *Friday* and ‘īd prayers, the recital shall be loud. The recital shall always be silent in the third *rak‘āt* of the *maghrib* and in the third and fourth of the ‘ishā prayer. In the *zuhr* and ‘āshr prayers, the recital shall be silent in all the four *rak‘āt*.

These are the utterances prescribed by the *shari‘ah* for the prayer. They are in Arabic, and besides these, a person can express any utterance in his own language which states the sovereignty of the Almighty, expresses gratitude towards Him or is a supplication.

v. Prayer Timings

It is incumbent upon the Muslims to pray five times a day. The time of each prayer is as follows:

*fajr*, *zuhr*, ‘āshr, *maghrib* and ‘ishā.

When the whiteness of the dawn emerges from the darkness of the night, then this is *fajr*.

When the sun starts to descend from midday, then this is *zuhr*.

When the sun descends below the line of sight, then this
is ‘asr.

The time of sunset is *maghrib*.

When the redness of dusk disappears, then this is ‘ishā.

The time of *fajr* remains till sunrise, the time of *zuhr* remains till ‘asr begins, the time of ‘asr remains till *maghrib*, the time of *maghrib* remains till ‘ishā and the time of ‘ishā remains till midnight. The times of sunrise and sunset are prohibited for praying since the sun used to be worshiped at these times. These timings have remained the same during the era of other Prophets as well.

vi. *Rakʿāt of the Prayer*

The *rakʿāt* of the prayer which have been fixed by the *sharīʿah* are:

- *fajr*: two
- *zuhr*: four
- ‘asr’: four
- *maghrib*: three
- ‘ishā’: four

These are the obligatory *rakʿāt* of each of these prayers, leaving which a person would be held accountable on the Day of Judgement. Thus, they must necessarily be offered except in cases when *qasr* has been permitted. All other *rakʿāt* apart from them are optional; they earn great reward for a person but will not hold him accountable on the Day of Judgement if he does not offer them.

vii. *Concession in the Prayer*

If the time of the prayer arrives in dangerous, disturbing, or disorderly circumstances, the Almighty has allowed a person to pray while on foot or riding in
whatever way possible. In these circumstances, it is evident that there shall be no congregational prayer, facing the qiblah shall not be necessary, and, in some situations, it shall not be possible to offer the practices of the prayer according to the prescribed method.

If such a situation arises during a journey, the Qur’ān has further said that people can shorten the prayer. In religious parlance, this is called qasr. The sunnah established by the Prophet (sws) in this regard is that the four rak‘āt prayer shall be shortened to two. No reduction shall be made in two and three rak‘āt prayers. Consequently, the fajr and the maghrib prayers will be offered in full in such circumstances. The reason is that while the former already has two rak‘āt, the latter is considered as the witr of daytime, and this status of the maghrib prayer cannot be changed.

From this concession granted in the prayer, concession has also been deduced in the times it is offered. Consequently, in such journeys the zuhr and the ‘asr prayers can be combined and the maghrib and the ‘ishā can also be combined and offered together.

viii. The Congregational Prayer

Although the prayer can be offered alone, it is desirable that it be offered in congregation and if possible in a place of worship. For this very purpose, the Prophet (sws) built a mosque as soon as he reached Madīnah and with this the practice of building mosques in all localities and settlements of Muslims was initiated. Praying in a mosque and showing diligence in praying in congregation is a highly rewarding practice earning the blessings of the Almighty. Though women are exempted from this, men
should not deprive themselves of this without any valid reason.

Following is the prescribed way of offering the congregational prayer:

a. Before this prayer, the *adhan* shall be called out so that people are able to join the prayer after hearing this call. The words which the Prophet (sws) has prescribed for the *adhan* are:

God is the greatest; I bear witness that there is no god besides Him; I bear witness that Muhammad is God’s messenger; Come towards the prayer; come towards salvation; God is the greatest; there is no god besides Him.

b. If there is only one follower, he will stand adjacent to the *imam* on his right side and if there are many followers they shall stand behind him and he shall stand in the centre ahead of them.

c. The *iqama* shall be called before the prayer begins. All the words of the *adhan* shall be uttered in it; however, after saying *الْفَلَاحِ لَيْلَىُ لِيُحْيِي* (the prayer is ready to be offered) shall be said by the person who says the *iqama*.

d. The words of the *adhan* can be repeated more than once for the purpose they are said.

e. The words of the *iqama* also can similarly be repeated if there is a need.
ix. Rectifying Mistakes in the Prayer

In case a person makes a mistake or thinks that he has made a mistake in the utterances and practices of the prayer, the amendment prescribed as a *sunnah* is that if amends can be made for the mistake, then they should be made and two prostrations should be offered before ending the prayer, and if making amends is not possible, then only the prostrations should be offered.

x. The Friday Prayer

On Fridays, it has been made incumbent upon Muslims to pray in congregation at the time of the *zuhr* prayer and in place of it. Following is the way prescribed for it:

a. There are two *rakʿāt* of this prayer.

b. In contrast with the *zuhr* prayer, the recital shall not be silent in both its *rakʿāt*.

c. The *iqāmah* shall be said before the prayer.

d. Before the prayer, the *imām* shall deliver two sermons to remind and urge people about various teachings of Islam. He shall deliver these sermons while standing. The *imām* shall sit for a short while after he ends the first sermon and shall then stand up to deliver the second one.

e. The *adhān* for the prayer shall be recited when the *imām* reaches the place where he is to deliver the sermon.

f. As soon as the *adhān* is said, it is incumbent upon all Muslim men to leave all their involvements and come to the mosque if they have no excuse.

g. The sermon shall be delivered and the prayer shall be led by the rulers of the Muslims and this prayer shall only be offered at places which have been specified by them or where a representative of theirs is present to lead
the prayer.

xi. The ‘Īd Prayer

On the days of ‘īd al-’adḥā and ‘īd al-fīṭr, it is essential for the Muslims that they arrange a collective prayer like that of the Friday prayer. It should be offered between the time of sunrise and the sun’s descent. Following is the prescribed way in which it should be offered:

a. This prayer shall consist of two rak‘āt.

b. In both rak‘āt, the recital shall be loud.

c. While standing in qiyām some additional takbīrs shall be recited.

d. Neither will there be any adhān for the prayer nor iqāmah.

e. After the prayer, the imām shall deliver two sermons to remind and urge people regarding the basic message of Islam. Both these sermons shall be delivered with the imām standing. He shall sit for a while in between the two.

f. Like the Friday prayer, this prayer too shall be led and its sermon delivered by the rulers of the Muslims and their representatives and it shall be offered only at those places which have been specified by them, where either they or their representatives are present to lead the prayer.

xii. The Funeral Prayer

In the religion of the prophets, the prayer for a deceased is held obligatory.

Once the dead body of the deceased is bathed and enshrouded, this prayer shall be offered in the following manner:

People shall stand in rows behind the imām while
placing the dead body between themselves and the qiblah.

The prayer shall begin by saying the takbīr and by raising hands.

Like the ‘īd prayer, some additional takbīrs shall be said in this prayer.

The prayer shall end after the salām is said while a person is standing once the takbīrs and the supplications have been offered.

This refers to the minimum obligatory worship related to the prayer. However, the Qur’ān says that he who did some virtuous act out of his own desire, God will accept it. Similarly, it is stated in the Qur’ān that help should be sought from perseverance and from the prayer in times of hardship. Consequently, while complying with these directives, Muslims, besides offering the obligatory prayers, show diligence and vigilance in offering optional prayers. The details of such optional prayers which the Prophet (sws) offered or urged others to offer can be looked up in various Ḥadīth narratives.

2. The Zakāh

After ṣalāh (the prayer), zakāh is the second important worship ritual in Islam. Among the various mannerisms which man has generally adopted to worship deities, one is to present before them a part of his wealth, livestock and produce. In the religion of the prophets, this is the essence of zakāh, and on this very basis, it is has been regarded as a ritual of worship. Names like ṣadaqah, niyādh, bhīnt and nadhr are also used for it.
Consequently, the Qur’ān has used the word ṣadaqah for it in various verses, and has explained that it should be paid with humility. The general custom about it was that once it had been presented, it was taken from the place of worship and given to its custodians so that they were able to serve the needs of the worshippers from this money. This practice has now been discontinued. In its place, Muslims have been directed to give this money to their rulers so that the needs of the state can be met; however, this change does not affect the essence of zakāh. It is reserved for the Almighty and when His servants pay it, the decision for accepting it also comes from Him.

i. History of Zakāh

The history of zakāh is the same as that of the prayer. It is evident from the Qur’ān that like the prayer its directive always existed in the sharī‘ah of the Prophets. When the Almighty asked the Muslims to pay it, it was not something unknown to them. All the followers of the religion of Abraham (sws) were fully aware of it. Thus it was a pre-existing sunnah which the Prophet (sws), with necessary reformations, gave currency among the Muslims at the behest of the Almighty.

ii. Objective of Zakāh

The objective of zakāh can be determined from its very name. The root of the word zakāh in Arabic has two meanings: “purity” and “growth”. It thus means the wealth given in the way of Allah to obtain purity of heart. It is evident from this that the objective of zakāh is the same as that of the whole of Islam. It cleanses the soul from the stains that can soil it because of love for
wealth, infuses blessings in the wealth and is instrumental in increasing the purity of the human soul. Zakāh is the minimum financial obligation on a person of spending his wealth in the way of God. A Muslim must fulfill it at all costs; thus it does not win what spending in the way of God beyond it wins; however, merely paying zakāh is enough to attach a person’s heart with the Almighty and greatly does away with indifference to the Almighty which so often comes in a person because of love for this world and its resources.

iii. Sharī‘ah of Zakāh

The sharī‘ah of zakāh can be stated as follows:

a. Nothing except the means and tools of trade, business and production, personal items of daily use and a fixed quantity called nisāb are exempt from zakāh. It shall be collected on wealth of all sorts, livestock of all types and produce of all forms of every Muslim citizen who is liable to it.

b. Following are its rates:

   (i) Wealth: 2 ½ % annually

   (ii) Produce: (i) 5 %: on all items which are produced primarily by the interaction of both labour and capital, (ii) 10 % on items which are produced such that the basic factor in producing them is either labour or capital and (iii) 20 % in items which are produced neither as a result of capital nor labour but actually are a gift of God.

   (iii) Livestock

   (a) CAMELS

       – From 5 to 24 (camels): one she-goat on every five camels

       – From 25 to 35: one one-year old she-camel or in its
absence, a two-year old camel
  – From 36 to 45: one two-year old she-camel
  – From 46 to 60: one three-year old she-camel
  – From 61 to 75: one four-year old she-camel
  – From 76 to 90: two two-year old she-camels
  – From 91 to 120: two three-year old she-camels
  – Over 120: one two-year old she-camel on every forty camels and one three-year old on every fifty camels

(b) COWS
  – one one-year old calf on every thirty cows and one two-year old calf on every forty cows

(c) GOATS
  – From 40 to 120: one she-goat
  – From 121 to 200: two she-goats
  – From 201 to 300: three she-goats
  – Over 300: one she-goat on every hundred goats

c. The heads in which zakāh can be spent are stated in the Qur’ān thus:
(i) The poor and the needy.
(ii) The salaries of all employees of the state.
(iii) All political expenditures in the interest of Islam and the Muslims.
(iv) For liberation from slavery of all kinds.
(v) For helping people who are suffering economic losses, or are burdened with a fine or a loan.
(vi) For serving Islam and for the welfare of the citizens.
(vii) For helping travellers and for the construction of roads, bridges and rest houses for these travellers.
d. One form of zakāh is the ṣadaqah of ʿfīr. It is the
food of a person that he consumes in a day and is obligatory on every person whether young or old, and is given at the end of Ramadān before the ʿīd prayer is offered.

3. The Fast

After the prayer and zakāh, the fast is the next important worship ritual of Islam. In the Arabic language, the word used for it is ﺽﺽ   (ṣawm), which literally means “to abstain from something” and “to give up something”. As a term of the Islamic sharīʿah, it refers to the state of a person in which he is required to abstain from eating and drinking and from marital relations with certain limits and conditions. A person expresses himself through deeds and practices; hence when his emotions of worship for the Almighty relate to his deeds and practices then these emotions, besides manifesting in worshipping Him, also manifest in obeying His commands. Fasts are a symbolic expression of this obedience. While fasting, a person, at the behest of His Lord, gives up things which are originally allowed to him to win His pleasure; he thus becomes an embodiment of obedience and through his practice acknowledges the fact that there is nothing greater than the command of God. So if the Almighty forbids him things perfectly allowed by innate guidance, then it is only befitting for a person who is the servant of his Creator to obey Him without any hesitation whatsoever.

A little deliberation reveals that this state of a person in which he experiences and acknowledges the power, magnificence and exaltedness of the Almighty is also a
true expression of gratitude from him. On this very basis, the Qur’ān says that the fast glorifies the Almighty and is a means through which gratitude can be shown to Him: The Qur’ān says that for this very purpose the month of Ramadān was set apart because in this month the Qur’ān was revealed as a guide for human intellect having clear arguments to distinguish right from wrong so that people could glorify God and express their gratitude to Him.

The excellence a person can attain in this ritual of worship is that while fasting he imposes certain other restrictions on himself and confines himself to a mosque for a few days to worship the Almighty as much as he can. In religious terminology, this is called ۸venth (i’tikāf). Though this worship ritual is not incumbent upon the believers like the fasts of Ramadān, it occupies great importance viz-a-viz purification of the soul. The cherished state which arises by combining the prayer and the fast with recitals of the Qur’ān and the feeling of being solely devoted to the Almighty having no one around helps achieve the objective of the fast in the very best way.

i. History of the Fast

Like the prayer, the fast is also an ancient ritual of worship. The Qur’ān says that fasting has been made obligatory for the Muslims, just as it was made so for earlier peoples. Consequently, this is a reality that as a ritual of worship which trains and disciplines the soul, it has existed in various forms in all religions.
ii. Objective of the Fast

The objective of the fast as delineated by the Qur’ān is that people adopt the *taqwā* of God. In the terminology of the Qur’ān, *taqwā* means that a person should spend his life within the limits set by Allah and should keep fearing Him from the depth of his heart that if ever he crosses these limits, there will be no one except God to save him from its punishment.

iii. *Sharī‘ah* of the Fast

Following is the *sharī‘ah* of the fast:

a. The fast is abstention from eating and drinking and from having sexual intercourse with the wife with the intention that a person is going to fast.

b. This abstention is from *fajr* to nightfall; hence eating and drinking and having sexual intercourse with the wife during the night is permitted.

c. The month of Ramadān has been fixed for fasting; hence it is obligatory for every person who is present in this month to fast.

d. If owing to sickness, travel or any other compelling reason a person is not able to keep all the fasts of Ramadān, it is incumbent upon him to make up for this by keeping in other months an equal number of the fasts missed.

e. Fasting during the menstrual and puerperal cycles is forbidden. However, the fasts missed as a result must be kept later.

f. The pinnacle of the fast is the *i‘tikāf*. If a person is given this opportunity by God, he should seclude himself from the world for as many days as he can in a mosque to worship the Almighty and he should not leave the mosque
except because of some compelling human need.

g. During iʿtikāf, a person is permitted to eat and drink during the night but he cannot have sexual intercourse with his wife. This has been prohibited by the Almighty.

4. Hajj and ‘Umrah

In the religion of Abraham (sws), these two rituals are the pinnacle of worship. Their history begins with the proclamation made by Abraham (sws) after building the House of God that people should come here to ceremonially devote themselves and revive their commitment to the belief of tawḥīd.

This is the highest position a person can attain in his zeal for worshiping the Almighty: he is ready to offer his life and wealth for Him when he is called for this. Hajj and ‘umrah are symbolic manifestations of this offering. Both are an embodiment of the same reality. The only difference is that the latter is compact and the former more comprehensive in which the objective for which life and wealth are offered becomes very evident.

The Almighty has informed us that Satan has declared war on the scheme according to which He has created Adam in this world since the very first day. Consequently, his servants are now at war with their foremost enemy till the Day of Judgement. This is the very test on which this world has been made and our future depends on success or failure in it. It is for this war that we dedicate our life and devote our wealth. This war against Iblīs has been symbolized in the ritual of ḥajj. The manner in which this symbolization has been
done is as follows:

At the behest of Allah, His servants take time out from the pleasures and involvements of life and leave aside their goods and possessions.

They then proceed to the battlefield with the words ۚیا بِشَرَّى ۚیا بِشَرَّى and just like warriors encamp in a valley.

The next day they reach an open field seeking the forgiveness of the Almighty, praying and beseeching Him to grant them success in this war and listening to the sermon of the imām.

Giving due consideration to the symbolism of waging war against Iblīs, they shorten and combine their prayers and then after a short stay on the way back reach their camps.

Afterwards they fling stones at Satan and symbolically offer themselves to God by sacrificing animals. They then shave their heads and to offer the rounds of vow come to the real place of worship and sacrifice.

Then they return to their camps again and in the next two or three days fling stones at Satan in the manner they had done earlier.

Viewed thus, the ihrām worn in hajj and ‘umrah symbolizes the fact that a believer has withdrawn from the amusement, attractions and involvements of this world and like a monk wearing two unstitched robes, bare-headed and to some extent bare-footed too has resolved to reach the presence of the Almighty.

The talbiyah is the answer to the call made by Abraham (sws) while standing on a rock after he had re-built the House of God. This call has now reached every nook and corner of this world and the servants of God while acknowledging His favours and affirming belief in
His *tawhīd* respond to it by reciting out these enchanting words:

\[
\text{ﻢﺍﹶﻟﻠﹼﻬﹶﻙ} \text{ﻳﻠﹶﺒﹶﻙ}.
\]

The rounds of *tawāf* are the rounds of vow. This is an ancient tradition of the Abrahamic religion. According to this tradition, animals which were to be sacrificed or devoted to the place of worship were made to walk to and fro in front of it or in front of the altar.

The *istilām* of the *hajar-i aswad* symbolizes the revival of the pledge. In it, a person while symbolizing this stone to be the hand of the Almighty, places his own hand in His and in accordance with the ancient tradition about covenant and pledges by kissing it revives his pledge with the Almighty. As per this pledge, after accepting Islam he has surrendered his life and wealth to Him in return for Paradise.

The *sa‘ī* is in fact the *tawāf* of the place where Ishmael (sws) was offered for sacrifice. Abraham (sws) while standing on the hill of *Ṣafā* had observed this place of sacrifice and then to fulfill the command of Allah had briskly walked towards the hill of *Marwah*. Consequently, the *tawāf* of *Ṣafā* and *Marwah* are the rounds of vow which are first made before the Ka‘bah and then at the place of sacrifice.

‘Arafāt is a surrogate for the Ka‘bah where the warriors gather to battle against Satan, seeking forgiveness for their sins and praying to God to grant them success in this war.

Muzdalifah is the place where the army stops and spends the night and the warriors once again pray and beseech the Lord when they get up in the morning on their way to the battlefield.

The *ramī* symbolizes cursing Iblīs and waging war
against him. This ritual is undertaken with the determination that a believer would not be happy with anything less than the defeat of Iblīs. It is known that this eternal enemy of man is persistent in implanting evil suggestions in the minds of people. However, if resistance is offered in return, his onslaught decreases gradually. Doing the *ramī* for three days first at the bigger Jamarāt and then at the smaller ones symbolizes this very resistance.

Animal sacrifice symbolizes that one is willing to sacrifice one’s life for the Almighty and shaving the head symbolizes that the sacrifice has been presented and a person with the mark of obedience and eternal servitude to the Almighty can now return to his home.

It is evident from the foregoing details how grand and extra-ordinary the ritual of *ḥājj* is. It has been made incumbent once in the life of a Muslim who has the capacity to undertake it.

i. Objective of *Ḥājj* and Umrah

The objective of *ḥājj* and *umrah* is the same as its essence and reality viz. acknowledgement of the blessings of the Almighty, affirmation of His *tawḥīd* and a reminder of the fact that after embracing Islam we have devoted and dedicated ourselves to Him. It is these things whose comprehension and cognizance are called the benefits (*manāfīʾ*) of the places of *ḥājj*. This objective is very aptly depicted in the utterances which have been specified for this ritual. It is evident that these expressions have been selected so that this objective is highlighted and fully implanted in the minds. Hence after wearing the *ihram*, these words flow from every
I am in your presence; O Lord I am in Your presence; I am in Your presence. Gratitude is for You and all blessings are Yours and sovereignty is for You only and no one is Your partner.

ii. Days of Hajj and Umrah

No time has been fixed for ‘umrah. It can be offered throughout the year whenever people want. However, the days of Hajj have been fixed from 8th to 13th Dhū al-Ḥajj and it can be offered in these days only.

iii. Methodology of Hajj and ‘Umrah

The methodology which has been fixed for Hajj and ‘umrah by the sharī‘ah is as follows:

a. ‘Umrah

First the ihtām should be put on with the intention of doing ‘umrah:

Those coming from outside Makkah should put on the ihtām from their respective miqāṭ; locals whether they are Makkans or are temporarily staying in Makkah should put it on from some nearby place located outside the limits of the Ḥaram. And for those who live outside the limits of Ḥaram but are located within the miqāṭ their miqāṭ is their place of residence. They can put the ihtām from their homes and begin reciting the talbiyah.
The recital of the *talbiyah* should continue till a pilgrim reaches the Baytullāh.

The *tawāf* of the Baytullāh should then be offered.

Then the *sa‘ī* should be offered between the Ṣafā’ and the Marwah.9

If the animals of *hadī* accompany a pilgrim, they should then be sacrificed.

After sacrifice, men should shave their heads or have a hair-cut and women should cut a small tuft from the end of their hair and then take off their *ihrām*.

The *ihrām* is a religious term. It signifies that pilgrims will not indulge in lewd talk; they will not use any adornments like perfume; they will not cut their nails nor shave or cut any body hair; they will not even remove any dirt or filth from them so much so they will not even kill any lice of their body; they will not hunt nor wear stitched cloth; they will expose their heads, faces and the upper part of their feet; they will wear one sheet as loin cloth and enfold another around themselves.

Women, however, can wear stitched clothes and even cover their heads and feet. They are only required to expose their hands and faces.

Certain places have been appointed before the limits of Ḥaram begin which can only be crossed in a state of *ihrām* by those who want to offer *ḥajj* and ‘*umrah*. In religious terminology, they are called *mīqāt* and are five in number. For those coming from Madīnah, the *mīqāt* is Dhū al-Ḥulayfah, for those coming from Yemen, it is Yalamlam, for those coming from Syria and Egypt, it is

9. These are two hillocks situated very near the Baytullāh. The incident of Ishmael’s sacrifice took place at Marwah.
Juhfah, for those coming from Najd, it is Qarn al-Manāzil and for those arriving from the East, it is Dhātu ‘Irq.

The talbiyah implies the constant recital of these words:

It begins right after putting on the ihram and continues till a pilgrim reaches the Baytullāh. This is the only recital which the Almighty has prescribed for hajj and ‘umrah.

The tawāf refers to the seven rounds which are made around the Baytullāh in a state of cleanliness. Each of these rounds begins with the ḥajar-i aswad and ends with it and the istilām of the ḥajar-i aswad is done at the beginning of each round. It means kissing the ḥajar-i aswad or touching it with the hands and then kissing the hands. If the place is crowded, a pilgrim can just raise his hands in its direction or even point a stick or something similar towards it.

The sa‘ī refers to the tawāf of the Ṣafā and Marwah. This also consists of seven rounds which begin with Ṣafā. A complete round extends from Ṣafā to Marwah. The last round ends on Marwah.

Like animal sacrifice, the sa‘ī between the Ṣafā and Marwah is optional. It is not an essential part of the ‘umrah. The ‘umrah is complete without it as well.

The hadī refers to the animals which have been specifically reserved to be sacrificed in the Ḥaram. In

10. This is a stone from the ancient construction of the Baytullāh which has been implanted in one of its corners as a symbol of revival of the pledge with the Almighty.
order to make them distinct from other animals, their bodies are marked and collars are tied around their necks.

b. Ḥajj

Like the ‘umrah, the Ḥajj too begins with the ihram. Consequently, the first thing that a pilgrim must do is to put on the ihram with the intention of offering Ḥajj.

Those coming from outside Makkah should put on the ihram from their respective mīqāt; locals whether they are Makkans or are temporarily staying in Makkah or live outside the limits of the Haram but are located within the mīqāt should put it on at their place of residence. This is their mīqāt. They can put the ihram from their homes and begin reciting the talbiyah.

Pilgrims should go to Minā on the eighth of Dhū al-Ḥajj and reside there.

They should go to ‘Arafāt on the ninth of Dhū al-Ḥajj. At ‘Arafāt, the imām will deliver the sermon before the zuhr prayer and the prayers of zuhr and ‘asr shall be offered by combining and shortening them.

After the prayer, pilgrims should celebrate the glory of their Lord and express their gratitude to Him, declare His exaltedness and oneness and invoke and beseech Him as much as they can.

They should set off for Muzdalifah after sunset.

After arriving at Muzdalifah, the pilgrims should offer the prayers of maghrīb and ʿishā by combining and shortening them.

The night must be spent in the field of Muzdalifah.

After the fajr prayer, the pilgrims for some time should celebrate the glory of their Lord and express their gratitude to Him, express His exaltedness and oneness and
invoke and beseech Him – just as they did at ‘Arafāt.

Then they should leave for Minā and once they reach the Jamrāh ‘Aqabah they should stop reciting the talbiyah and pelt this Jamrah with seven stones.

If the pilgrims have brought forth the hadī or if it has become incumbent upon them to sacrifice animals which have been devoted or which are a means of atonement, then these should be sacrificed.

After sacrifice, men should shave their heads or have a hair-cut and women should cut a small tuft from the end of their hair and then take off their ihram.

After that, the pilgrims should set off for the Baytullāh and offer the tawāf.

With this, all restrictions which the ihram entails shall be lifted. After that, if a pilgrim wants, he can offer the sa‘ī of the Ṣafā and the Marwah – though this is optional.

Then they should go back to Minā and stay there for two or three days and then everyday pelt first the first Jamrah, then the middle one and then the last one with seven stones each.

Ever since the times of Abraham (sws), these are the rites (manāsik) of hajj and ‘umrah. The Qur’ān has made no change in them; it has only explained certain issues which arose – issues about which there was no clear directive given previously.

The first of them is that showing reverence to whatever has been declared sacred by the Almighty regarding hajj and ‘umrah is a requirement of faith. This should be expressed and followed at all costs. If some other group violates this sanctity, Muslims too have the right to retaliate on equal footings. The reason is that keeping intact the sanctities ordained by the Almighty is
a two way practice. One member of the pact cannot just maintain it on its own.

The second issue is that in spite of the permission for war, Muslims cannot take any initiative in violating the sanctities. These are the sanctities ordained by God and taking the initiative in violating them is a grave sin. In no circumstances should this happen.

The third issue is that the prohibition of hunting while a pilgrim is wearing the *iḥrām* is only for animals of the land. Hunting sea animals or eating sea animals which have been hunted by others is allowed. However, this permission does not mean that people wrongfully benefit from it. The prey hunted on land is prohibited in all circumstances. So if a person deliberately commits such a sin, he must atone for it.

There are three ways for this atonement:

A household quadruped similar animal to that which has been hunted should be sent to the Baytullāh for sacrifice.

If this is not possible, then the price of such an animal should be calculated and the amount spent to feed the poor.

If even this is not possible, then a person should fast; the number of these fasts should be equivalent to the number of poor a person has become liable to feed.

As far as the decision is concerned regarding the type of animal to be sacrificed in return, or if this is not possible then the determination of the price of such an animal or the number of poor which should be fed or the number of fasts which should be kept, it shall be made by two trustworthy Muslims so that no chance remains for the sinner to succumb to a wrong judgement.
The fourth issue is that if the pilgrims are not able to reach the Sacred House and are stranded somewhere they can send a camel, cow or a goat for sacrifice or if even this is not possible they should slaughter them at the place they are stranded and after shaving their heads they can take off their \textit{ihrām}. This will complete their \textit{hajj} and \textit{‘umrah}. However, this much should remain clear that whether the sacrifice is offered at such a place or in Makkah or Minā, shaving the head is not permissible before it. The only exception to this is if a person is sick or he has some ailment in his head and he is forced to shave his head before animal sacrifice. The Qur‘ān has allowed the pilgrims to do so in such circumstances but they should atone for this in the form of keeping fasts, or spending in the way of God or sacrificing an animal(s). The amount and quantity of these acts of atonement are left to their own discretion.

The fifth issue is that if those who have come from outside want to combine the \textit{hajj} with the \textit{‘umrah} in one journey, they can do so. The way to do this is that they should first take off the \textit{ihrām} after offering the \textit{‘umrah}. Then they should again wear it on the eighth of Dhū al-\textit{Hājj} and then offer \textit{hajj}. This is a mere concession which the Almighty has provided the pilgrims to save themselves of the bother of two journeys. Thus they will atone for benefiting from this lenience. There are two ways for this:

They should offer the sacrifice of whatever animal is available to them from a camel, cow or goat.

If this is not possible, then they should fast for ten days: three during their \textit{hajj} stay and seven when they return.

It is evident from the above explanation that what is
pleasing in the sight of God is that one should make separate journeys for *hajj* and *‘umrah*. Thus the Qur’ān has clarified that this lenience is not for those whose houses are near the Sacred Mosque.

The sixth issue is that pilgrims can return from Minā on the 12th of Dhū al-Ḥajj and can also stay on till the 13th. The Almighty has said that both cases will incur no sin. The reason for this is that the extent of stay does not hold real significance; what does hold real significance is whether the time of stay however much it be was spent in the remembrance of God or not.

5. Animal Sacrifice

In all ancient religions of the world, the ritual of animal sacrifice has remained a great means of attaining the nearness of the Almighty. Its essence is the same as that of the *zakāh*, but it should not be regarded as analogous to wealth; it is essentially a vow of pledging one’s life and is fulfilled by the animal we sacrifice on behalf of our life.

i. History of Animal Sacrifice

The history of sacrifice begins with Adam (sws). According to the Qur’ān, when two of his sons (Abel and Cain) presented their offerings to the Almighty, one of them was accepted and the other was not. It is explicitly mentioned in the Bible that Abel on this occasion had offered the sacrifice of some first born of his flock of goats and sheep.

This practice quite evidently must have continued later also. Consequently, there exist signs and remnants in all
ancient religions which corroborate this fact. However, the way this worship ritual has increased in its importance, grandeur and scope after the sacrifice of Abraham (sws), it has become unprecedented. When he was asked to sacrifice an animal in place of his son, the Almighty said that He ransomed Ishmael (sws) by a great sacrifice. This meant that the sacrifice offered by Abraham (sws) had been accepted and in order to commemorate this incident the ritual of sacrifice was instituted as a great tradition to be carried out generation after generation. It is this optional worship of sacrifice which we offer with fervour and enthusiasm on the occasions of ḥajj and ʿumrah and on ʿīd of al-adhā.

ii. Objective of Animal Sacrifice

The objective of sacrifice is to express gratitude to the Almighty. When we offer our life symbolically to the Almighty by offering the sacrifice of an animal, we are in fact expressing our gratitude on the guidance of submission which was expressed by Abraham (sws) by sacrificing his only son. On this occasion, the words uttered to declare the exaltedness and oneness of the Almighty are done so for this very objective. Viewed thus, animal sacrifice is the pinnacle of worship. When we make an animal stand or bow down in the direction of the Baytullāh and also direct our own face towards the House of God and present the sacrificed animal as an offering to God by saying: َاﹶﻛﹾﺒﹾﺍﹶﷲُ َﻭﹸ.lv'wāl, we are actually offering our own selves to God.

iii. Sharīʿah of Animal Sacrifice

The sharīʿah regarding animal sacrifice can be stated
thus:

a. All four legged animals which are cattle can be sacrificed.

b. Sacrificial animals should not be flawed and should be of appropriate age.

c. The time of animal sacrifice begins after offering the ‘īd prayer on the 10th of Dhū al-Ḥajj (yawm al-nahr).

d. The days fixed for animal sacrifice are the same as have been appointed for the stay at Mina once the pilgrims return from Muzdalifah. In religious parlance, they are called “the days of tashrīq”. Besides animal sacrifice in these days, the Sunnah has been instituted that takbīrs should be declared at the end of each congregational prayer. Being an absolute directive, the words of the takbīr have not been fixed.

5. The meat of sacrificial animals can also be eaten without any hesitation by those who have had them slaughtered and can also be used to feed others.
II. The Social Sharīʻah

Man by nature likes to live in a community. The reason that the Almighty has given him this nature is that He does not create human beings in the prime of their youth. Similarly, He does not generally make them die in their youth without making them pass through old age. On the contrary, a human being is created as a feeble child in the womb of the mother. He enters this world to be welcomed by her loving affection and then grows being nurtured and nourished by others. At first, he drags himself and then crawls on his knees before he is able to stand on his feet with great difficulty. Even after this state, he needs the help of others at every step. Finally, after going through various phases of childhood and adolescence, he enters the prime of his youth at the age of fifteen or sixteen. This blooming period of his life also does not last more than twenty to thirty years. Then comes old age and in spite of many a time attaining great heights in intellect in his prime, he once again has to turn to others to fulfill his needs like a frail child for the rest of his life.

This life cycle of man entails that he live in a social set-up. As a man or a woman, from the very beginning of life, this affinity towards a social set-up is fully found in his being. He does not need to find this tendency in his external world. When he enters this world, he brings with him all his internal urges and inner motivations and uses
The history of mankind shows that owing to this very aspect of human nature, when Adam, the founder of the human dynasty was sent in this world, he was blessed with a wife from his own species – someone who was meant to be his companion. From these two sprang many men and women as their progeny. Gradually, a family, a tribe and finally a state came into existence. The resultant social set-up afforded man the opportunity to realize his hidden potentials and urges.

It is in consideration of all these facts and to firmly establish a society on these fundamentals that an everlasting bond between the spouses is made essential in the religion of the Prophets. If the whole life of a human being – from childhood to old age – is kept in consideration, sense and reason endorse that to fulfill his physical, psychological and social needs an everlasting marriage bond between the spouses is essential. Consequently, the Almighty has given a social sharī‘ah to man through His Prophets in order to guide human intellect in certain spheres regarding the society which is established on this basis.

Following are the details of this sharī‘ah of God:

1. Marriage

The only legitimate way for a man and a woman to satisfy their sexual desire from one another is marriage (nikāh). Marriage is an open declaration of a contract by a man and woman to live permanently as husband and wife. It is declared in the presence of people through a responsible personality with great solemnity and gravity after he delivers a sermon to counsel and guide them.
Women too like men have the right to take a decision for their marriage and freely exercise their opinion within the bounds and limits set by the Almighty. Without their consent, they cannot be forced to marry.

2. Relations Prohibited for Marriage
   It is prohibited to marry one’s mother, daughter, sister, paternal and maternal aunts and the daughters of one’s brother or sister. The Almighty wants the gaze of a son for his mother, of a father for his daughter, of a brother for his sister, of a nephew for both his maternal and paternal aunts, of a maternal and a paternal uncle for their nieces to remain free from the slightest trace of sexual leaning. The reason is that any sort of sexual proclivity between these relations is devastating for human dignity and honour and is totally against the unadulterated state of chastity and purity that distinguishes man from animals. Foster relations too have a similar sanctity as the real ones. Thus every relation prohibited through lineage for marriage is prohibited on the basis of fosterage too. After lineage and fosterage, are relationships which emerge on the basis of marriage itself. Such is the obviousness of the sanctity of these relationships in human nature that no reasoning is required. Consequently, the daughter-in-law is prohibited for the father-in-law, and the mother-in-law, the wife’s daughter, the wife’s sister and both nieces and both aunts (maternal and paternal) of the wife are all prohibited for the husband. However, since these relationships are formed through the husband and the wife, a degree of weakness is found in them. Owing to this reason, the Qur’ān has imposed the following three conditions on the prohibition of these relationships:

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Firstly, only the daughter of that wife is prohibited with whom one has had conjugal contact.
Secondly, only the wife of a real son is prohibited.
Thirdly, the sister of a wife and her two nieces and aunts are only prohibited if the wife is in wedlock with the husband.
Besides these relations, marriage with the step-mother and with a woman who is married to someone is also prohibited.

3. Requisites of Nikāh (Marriage)
A nikāh should be conducted through wealth – which here means dower. The Qur’ān emphasizes that the Almighty has ordained this payment as an essential prerequisite of marriage. When a man and a woman pledge to remain in a permanent relationship through marriage, it is the man who has always taken the financial responsibility of the woman he is bringing home. The dower is nothing but a symbolic expression of this responsibility. The sharī‘ah has not fixed any amount for the dower. It has left it to the norms and traditions of a society. Consequently, it can be fixed according to the social status of the woman and the financial status of the man who is to become her husband.

Chastity is also a requisite of marriage. No adulterer has the right to marry a chaste woman and no adulteress has the right to marry a chaste man, except if the matter has not gone to court and the two purify themselves of this sin by sincere repentance. Similar is the case of polytheism: just as it cannot be acceptable in any way that a husband or wife commit marital unfaithfulness, similarly, it is totally unacceptable for a Muslim that someone else
besides the Almighty be worshipped in his house. In fact, this is more detestable a sin than sleeping with some other woman. In the case of the Jews and Christians, the Almighty was lenient enough to Muslims to allow marriage with their chaste women. This was because Jews and Christians in spite of being deeply incriminated with the filth of polytheism are basically monotheists.

4. Rights and Obligations of the Spouses

A family is like a small state. Just as every state requires a ruler for its establishment and survival, this small state also requires someone to take charge of its helm. Either the husband could have been bestowed with this responsibility or the wife. The Qur’ān informs us that because of certain physical and temperamental abilities, the husband has been entrusted with this responsibility and as an essential result of this has required two things from the wives: firstly, they should be obedient and adaptable to their husbands and secondly, they should keep the secrets of their husbands and protect their honour and integrity.

If a wife becomes inclined to disrupt the discipline of the house by challenging this status of the husband, the Almighty has said that three options can be adopted by him to save the family.

First, a wife should be urged to mend her ways. The word used by the Qur’ān is ـﻆ which means that she can be admonished and also scolded to some extent in this regard.

Second, intimate marital relations with her should be suspended in order to communicate to her that if she does not mend her ways she might have to face severe
repercussions.
Third, she should be punished physically. This punishment should only be as much as a teacher gives to a student or what a father gives to his children.
A gradual sequence should be adopted in exercising these three options. In other words, the second step after the first and the third after the second should only be adopted if the husband is convinced that there is no other option but to go on to the next step. These measures point to the utmost limit to which a husband can go regarding admonishing his wife. If the wife mends her ways through these measures, a husband should not look for revenge and vengeance.
If a person dislikes his wife, he should not subject her to harsh treatment in order to recover any wealth or property that he has gifted her. Such an attitude can only be accepted if the wife is guilty of open sexual transgression. If the wife is not guilty of such behaviour and is living as a faithful and obedient lady leading a virtuous life, it is totally against justice and decency for the husband to harass her merely because he dislikes her. No doubt if a wife shows moral misconduct, then this is a detestable thing, but no husband is allowed to deprive her the rights of a decent living because he does not like her looks or because her temperament is different from his. A husband who does not like his wife should still deal with her in accordance with the norms of justice and equity, graciousness and decency, reason and human nature.

5. Polygamy
As per the norms of human nature, the real benefits and advantages of the institution of family manifest
themselves in a monogamous family. It is basically social, psychological, political and cultural needs because of which the tradition of polygamy has existed in every society whether in a pronounced or mild form. To cater for these very needs, the Almighty never forbade this practice in the *sharī‘ah* He revealed in various periods of time. However, when the Qur‘ān urged the Muslims to make use of this practice to solve a social problem that had arisen in the time of the Prophet (sws), it made it conditional upon two things:

First, even for as noble an objective as the welfare of orphans, a person cannot marry more than four wives.

Second, if a person is not able to deal justly with his wives, he should not marry more than one because justice is a value that has to be maintained at all costs and cannot be sacrificed even for such a noble cause.

However, this justice does not mean equality in a person’s inner inclination and his outer behaviour. Such justice is not possible for any person and even if someone wants to do such justice, he cannot do so. This is because a person has no power over his heart in such affairs. Therefore, in this regard it is enough for a husband to not completely lean towards one of the wives and show indifference to the other, as if she had no husband.

Whether marriage has taken place to protect the rights of the orphans or for some other purpose, payment of dower and discharging of justice are the rights of a woman and the former must be given with the willingness of the heart. However, if it is feared that a husband may show indifference to his wife or even think of parting ways with her because of her insistence to be treated equally with other wives, it is alright if a husband
and wife settle for a compromise.

6. Limits of Sexual Intimacy
A husband and wife are prohibited to have sexual intercourse when the wife is passing through her menstrual or puerperal cycle. This prohibition is till the blood stops and once it stops this prohibition is lifted; however, the desirable way in this regard is to have intercourse after she has bathed and to have it necessarily in the way prescribed by God.

7. Īlā
It is not allowed to sever sexual relations from one’s wife without a valid reason. So much so, if a person swears such an oath, he must break it. A period of four months has been fixed for it after which a husband must decide to either resume the marital relationship or to divorce her.

8. Zīhār
If a person is unseemly enough to regard his wife as his mother or likens some limb of his wife to that of his mother, then such an utterance does not make the wife his mother and neither is she endowed with the sanctity a mother has. Consequently, such an utterance neither breaks marital ties nor does a wife become prohibited for a person like his mother. However, a person who utters these words shall not be allowed to go scot-free. Such loose talk gravely affects social life, and thus it is essential that such a person be punished for this unbecoming behaviour so that he is careful in future and others also learn a lesson from this. Consequently, it is decreed by the Almighty that he must atone his sin
before going near his wife in the following manner:
   A slave-woman or a slave-man should be set free.
   If slaves are not available, he should fast consecutively
   for two months.
   If this is also not possible, he should feed sixty indigent
   persons.

9. Divorce

   If it becomes impossible for a husband and wife to get
   along with one another, there has always existed in divine
   religions the option of separation from one another. In
   religious parlance, this separation is called divorce.

   Before circumstances reach an extent that divorce
   remains the only option, it should be the intense desire of
   every person to keep intact the marital relationship as far
   as possible. However, if all efforts of reformation fail and
   it becomes evident that this relationship cannot remain
   intact, the Almighty has asked Muslims to make a last
   ditch effort: the relatives of the couple, their clan and tribe
   and other well-wishers should come forward and use their
   influence to set right the situation. The procedure outlined
   in this regard is that one arbitrator should be appointed
   from the husband’s family and another from the wife’s
   family. Both these arbitrators should try to reconcile the
   two in the hope that what the husband and wife could not
   accomplish themselves would be accomplished by the
   elders and well-wishers of the two families.

   A husband is the head of the family. He is responsible
   for financially providing for her. On these very grounds,
   he has been given the right to divorce. So, if a wife
   wants to separate from her husband, she cannot divorce
   him; on the contrary, she will demand divorce from him.
In general circumstances, it is hoped that every gentleman, seeing that there is no other way out, would accept this demand. However, if this does not happen to be the case, a wife can turn to the court of law. It can order a husband to give her divorce or can annul the marriage contract.

Whether a husband divorces his wife because of his own decision or does so at the demand of his wife, in both cases the procedure of divorce prescribed by the Qur’ân is as follows:

i. Divorce should be given keeping in consideration the ‘iddat. This means that it is incorrect to divorce a wife in a manner that separates her instantaneously. In all instances, it must be given after a considered intention of separation and it becomes effective after a specific waiting period. ‘Iddat in religious parlance means the period in which a divorced or widowed lady cannot marry any other person. Since this period has been primarily fixed in order to ascertain whether a lady is pregnant or not, therefore it is necessary that divorce be given after a lady has completed her menstrual cycle in that period of cleanliness in which the husband did not have any sexual intercourse with his wife.

ii. Muslims must carefully keep count of the period of ‘iddat. Since divorce is a matter of great consequences, and a lot of legal issues arise for the man, the woman, their children and their whole family, it is essential that the time and date of divorce be properly accounted for. Moreover, it is essential that at the time of divorce, the state of the woman, the date when the ‘iddat commenced and the date when it will end be kept track of.

iii. Until the ‘iddat period expires the husband has the
right to take back his wife. If the husband does not take back his wife within the ‘iddat period, then once this period expires the relationship of wedlock will cease to exist. Consequently, the husband is directed to make up his mind once this period is approaching its end. He should decide if he has to revoke his decision and take her back or is to persist with his decision and sever his relationship with her. In both cases, the Almighty has directed him to follow the ma‘rūf (good conventions) of the society. Following are the directives given by the Qur’ān in this regard:

Firstly, whatever amount of wealth, property, clothes, jewelry and other items that have been gifted to the wife by the husband should not be confiscated by him. nafqah (maintenance) and mahr (dowry) are the absolute rights of a wife and confiscating them is unthinkable. What is emphasized by the Qur’ān is that a husband should not take back anything besides these two that he may have given her.

There are two exceptions to this directive:

First, if it is no longer possible to keep a marriage intact according to the limits set by Allah, and the family elders and society also support the annulment, but a husband is unwilling to divorce his wife simply because he is concerned about losing wealth, property or other gifts he has given his wife, then the issue can be resolved in the following manner: the wife can give back part or all of the wealth gifted to her to relieve herself of her marital contract. In such cases, it would be lawful for the husband to accept these returned gifts.

Second, if the wife is guilty of open sexual misconduct. Since such a behaviour destroys the very basis of the
marital relationship, it is lawful for the husband to take back any gifts or wealth given to her.

Secondly, the husband shall not be responsible to give the dower if the wife is divorced such that the husband has not touched her or her dower had not been fixed. However, if the dower had been fixed but a lady was divorced before having sexual relations with the husband, then the husband is liable to pay half the amount of the dower fixed except if the wife willingly forgoes the total amount or the husband pays the full amount.

Thirdly, a wife at the time of parting should be given some resources of life. The Qur’ān says that this is an obligation of those who fear God and those who are righteous. Its quantity shall be fixed keeping in view the custom of the society and the financial circumstances of the husband. If a lady is divorced even without going near her or if the dower had not been fixed, a husband is exhorted to fulfill this obligation.

iv. If a husband revokes his decision within the ‘iddat, the lady will continue to remain his wife. A person can only twice exercise this right of divorcing his wife in the ‘iddat and then revoking the decision in his marriage with a lady within this period. However, once he has used this authority twice in his marriage with a lady, he can no longer use it again the third time. In such a situation, his wife would be permanently separated from him except if she marries some other person and he then also divorces her.

v. Whether the husband decides to divorce his wife or to take her back, in both cases he should call in two trustworthy Muslim witnesses on his decision. The reason for this directive is to ensure that either of the
parties is not able to refute a decision made and to resolve any other dispute that may arise in this regard.

vi. In normal circumstances, the ‘iddat is three menstrual cycles and if a woman is pregnant then the ‘iddat will extend to child-birth; however, if a woman does not menstruate because of advancing age or in spite of reaching puberty, then this period would be three months. If sexual relations have not been established with a woman, then, since the question of pregnancy does not even arise, there is no ‘iddat for her.

The directives of ‘iddat which are mentioned in the Qur’ân are as follows:

Firstly, during ‘iddat neither should a wife leave her house nor is the husband authorized to turn her out from her house. Living together might hopefully be beneficial for both and they might reconcile and thus save a family from breaking. The only exception to the above directive is if the basis on which a divorce has been given is open sexual misconduct. Obviously, in such a situation neither is it proper to demand from the husband to keep the wife in the house nor can the benefit be attained for which this directive had been given.

Secondly, it is stated that a husband should provide residence and maintenance to his divorced wife according to his status. After divorce, a husband can be very stingy in this regard. Consequently, he has been directed not to provide for her in a manner that damages her self-esteem and she is forced to leave her house herself.

Thirdly, no lady should try to conceal her pregnancy during her ‘iddat. The Almighty has laid great stress on this instruction because the very directive to observe the ‘iddat has been given for ascertaining whether a lady is
vii. Even after divorce, if the husband who has given this divorce wants that this divorced wife should suckle his child, then she should carry out this responsibility for two years. If she is willing to suckle the child, then the husband shall pay her for this service and this remuneration shall be ascertained through mutual consultation and in a befitting manner. If the father of the child is dead, his heirs will be responsible for all the above mentioned rights and obligations. If through mutual consent and consultation, the estranged husband and wife decide to terminate the suckling period before two years, they can do so. If the child’s father or, in his absence, the heirs of the child want to suckle the child through some other lady instead of the mother, they are authorized to do so provided what has been promised with the mother is fully honoured.

viii. After divorce, a husband has no right to cause any hindrance if his former wife wants to marry someone. She has the liberty to marry whoever and whenever she wants. If her decision to marry is in accordance with the norms of the society, it cannot be objected to in any way.

10. Directives relating to Widows

The ‘iddat of a widow is four months and ten days. In contrast to the ‘iddat of a divorced lady, the ‘iddat of a widow has been extended by forty days. The reason is that while a husband has been asked to divorce his wife in the period of purity (in which he has had no sexual intercourse with her), obviously no such requirement can be proposed in the case of a widow. It is to exercise care that forty days have been added by the Qur’ān to the
waiting period of a woman who loses her husband.

Since the purpose for observing the ‘iddat is the same for both a divorced woman and a widow, hence all exceptions which are stated in cases of divorce, shall have to be kept in consideration for the ‘iddat of a widow also. Consequently, a widow with whom marriage has not been consummated shall have no ‘iddat and the ‘iddat of a pregnant widow will end on childbirth.

After the ‘iddat period expires, the wife is free to do whatever she deems appropriate for herself. However, she should follow the norms of the society in this matter. In other words, she should not indulge in any activity which damages the repute, honour and integrity of the family nor the conventions of a society. If all this is kept in consideration, then no aspersions can be cast on her or her guardians.

If a person wants to marry a widow, then during her waiting period he can make up his mind to do so or inform her of his intentions in a very tacit manner. However, it is not permitted that he, without considering the sentiments of the affected family, send a marriage proposal to the widow or make some hidden agreement with her.

The husbands should make a will in favor of their wives for the provision of one year’s residence and maintenance, except if the wives themselves leave the house or take any other similar step.

11. Norms of Gender Interaction

In order to protect the institution of marriage and to safeguard the sanctity of personal relationships, the Almighty has prescribed certain norms and etiquette for
gender interaction.

These norms are:

i. If friends, relatives or acquaintances visit one another, they should follow a certain decorum. Suddenly barging into a house without acquiring permission is improper. The visitor should first of all properly introduce himself by paying salutations to the residents of the house. This will make the residents aware of the visitor, provide them with the opportunity to determine the purpose of his visit and whether it is appropriate for them to let him in. If the visitor hears a reply to his salutations and is given permission, only then should he enter. If there is no one present in the house to give him permission or if someone is present and the visitor is told on his behalf that meeting him is not possible, he should retreat without any feelings of ill-will.

These norms are not meant to deprive people of mutual support or to curtail their social freedom. Hence whether it is the people themselves or their relatives who are disabled or impaired in any manner who live with these people, there is no harm if they visit one another and whether men and women among them eat together or separately in their own houses or of their children’s, fathers’, grandfathers’, mothers’, brothers’ and sisters’ houses or of their paternal uncles’ and paternal aunts’, maternal uncles’ and maternal aunts’ houses or of people who are financially dependent on them or of friend’s houses. Indeed, when they enter such houses they must greet the residents in the prescribed way.

ii. In case the visited place is non-residential, no formal permission is required. These include hotels, rest-houses, guest-houses, shops, offices and meeting places.
Similarly, slave-men and women and sexually immature children who generally frequent a house are not required to take permission every time they enter private rooms. They are just required to seek permission in three particular times of the day: before the \textit{fajr} prayer when the residents are generally in bed, during the nap in the afternoon when they may not be wearing proper clothes and after the \textit{‘ishā} prayer when they go off to bed for sleep. These three periods of time require privacy. Barring these three times of the day, sexually immature children and slave-men and women can enter the private rooms and other areas of the house without taking any permission. However, children, once they reach sexual maturity, must seek permission at all times. After reaching this age, they must follow the regulations which pertain to all.

iii. In both types of visited places, if women are present then the divine directive is that both men and women present should restrain their gazes. If there is modesty in the gazes, and men and women refrain from feasting their eyes on the physical attributes of one another and ogling each other, then no doubt the purport of the directive stands fulfilled because the purpose of this directive is not to desist from seeing at all or to constantly stare at the floor while interacting with one another. It means to guard one’s gaze from taking undue liberty and to refrain from staring at one another.

iv. One must properly protect one’s sexual organs on such occasions of interaction. This means that neither should these organs have any inclination for others nor should they be exposed to others. In fact, on occasions of
gender-intermingling, body parts which need to be covered must be covered even more carefully. The primary way to achieve this end is to wear decent clothes. Men and women should wear such clothes which not only hide the ornaments worn but also the sexual organs. Moreover, on such occasions, care should be taken that a person does not expose his sexual organs.

v. It is necessary for women in particular not to display any of their embellishments except before their mahram relatives and attendants. However, exempted from this are embellishments adorning on limbs which are generally never covered: ie, make-up and the ornaments worn on the hand, the face and the feet. Barring the make-up and ornaments worn on these places, women must hide the embellishments worn in all other places. So much so, they should not walk by striking their feet in a manner which draws attention to any hidden ornaments they may be wearing.

vi. Since the chest of women is a means of sexual attraction, and there also may be jewelry worn in the neck, they are directed to cover their chests with a cloak. This directive of covering the chest and the neckline does not pertain to old women who are no longer of marriageable age on the condition that their intention is not to show off their ornaments. However, what is more pleasing in the sight of Allah is that even in this age they be careful and not dispense with this garment in the presence of men. This is more seemly.

12. Directives relating to Parents

The most important of relationships which are produced as a result of marriage is that of the parents.
All divine scriptures instruct man to show kindness to the parents. The bounds and limits of this directive can be stated thus:

i. A person should be most grateful to his parents after his Lord. This gratitude must not be expressed merely by the tongue. It should also manifest in good behaviour towards them. The obvious outcome of this is that a person should respect them and never become fed up of them. He must not utter a single word of disrespect to them. Instead, he should be soft, sympathetic, loving and obedient to them. He should listen to them and be caring and affectionate to them in the tenderness of old age.

ii. In spite of the status that Islam confers upon parents, they do not have the right to force their children to baselessly associate someone with the Almighty. The children should openly disobey their parents with regard to polytheism and should follow the way of those who follow God. Any calls to evade the Almighty must not receive any positive response even if it is the parents who are giving the call. Consequently, all other directives of the Almighty shall also be considered subservient to this directive, and one cannot disobey these directives if the parents ask them to do so.

iii. Even if the parents force their children to commit a sin as heinous as polytheism, they must always be treated in a befitting manner. Their needs should be met as far as possible and a prayer of guidance be continued to be made for them. The children may have a right to disobey their parents if they insist upon disobedience to the directives of religion but still they must not be slack or indifferent, in any way, to their duty towards their parents.
13. Directives related to Orphans

Certain specific directives are given in the Qur’ān about orphans. They can be summarized as follows:

i. Guardians of the orphans should return their wealth to them and should not think of devouring it themselves. Consuming the wealth of orphans is like filling one’s belly with fire. So no one should try to swap his poor merchandise and assets for their good ones. Neither should a person try to benefit from their wealth while mixing it with his own, feigning administrative ease. If such intermingling needs to be done, then it should only be for the orphans’ welfare and well-being and not to usurp their wealth.

ii. Protecting the orphans’ wealth and safeguarding their rights are significant responsibilities. If it becomes difficult to fulfill these responsibilities alone, and people think that ease and facility can be created by involving the mothers of the orphans, then they can marry the lawful among them. Their number should not exceed four. However, such multiple marriages should only be resorted to if a person is able to deal justly with the wives. If people think that they would not be able to do so, then even for an objective as noble as welfare of the orphans they should not marry more than one. Justice should always reign supreme. Moreover, while entering into marriage, the mothers of the orphans should also be given *mahr* (dower) just as other women are given. The pretext that marriage has been contracted with them for the welfare of their own children is not acceptable in this regard. However, if such a mother gladly forgoes a portion or the total *mahr* amount, then of course this generosity can be benefited from.
iii. The directive of returning to orphans their money should be carried out when they reach maturity and are able to properly manage their wealth. Prior to this, it should remain in the protection of their guardians, who should continue to judge the orphans regarding their ability to manage and handle monetary affairs. In this interim period, however, the orphans’ needs and welfare should be provided for. The guardians should not hastily consume the wealth of the orphans fearing that they will lose access to this wealth because the orphans will soon reach maturity. In addition, the guardians must take note to speak very affectionately to the orphans.

iv. If a guardian is well-off, he should not take anything from the orphans in return for his service, and if he is poor, he can take his due according to the norms of the society.

v. When the time comes to hand over an orphan his wealth, some trustworthy and reliable people should be made witnesses in order to avoid any misconceived notions and dissensions. One should also remember that one day this account shall be presented before the Almighty. He sees and knows all things and nothing can be hidden from Him.

vi. Although the shares of the heirs to a deceased are fixed, yet if at the time of distribution of inheritance some close relatives, orphans or poor people happen to come by, then whether they have a legal right in his inheritance or not, they should be given something and be spoken to in a befitting manner at their departure. On such occasions, a person should always keep in mind that his own children can become orphans and he may one day have to similarly leave them at the mercy of others.
III. The Political Sharī‘ah

Man, by his nature, is a social being: a social set-up is an essential requirement of his nature. However, to protect this social set-up from the misuse of his God-given free-will he, soon or late, is forced to protect the created social set-up by organizing it as a collective system. In the history of mankind, politics and governments have originated as a result of this desire of man for a social set-up and this need of his to safeguard it from disorder. As long as man remains true to his nature, he cannot get rid of either this desire or this need. Therefore, prudence demands that instead of dreaming of a stateless society in this world, he should strive to constitute a social contract that purifies the state system from evils and develops it in the right direction thereby providing it with the basis of a fair and upright government.

A study of history reveals that, for the most part, man’s own nature instructed him to create such a social contract. However, the results alone of his labors that can be seen clearly by everyone attest to the last degree to the fact that, as in other affairs of human life, human intellect is unable to decisively resolve certain basic issues in this regard without divine guidance. It is to fulfill this need that the Gracious Almighty has given man a detailed political sharī‘ah through His Book and
through His last Prophet (sws).

It consists of the following five statutes:

1. **Basic Principle**
   
   In all affairs in which an eternal directive has been given by God and His Prophet (sws), it is now incumbent upon those in authority whether they are the rulers or members of the parliament to submit to them and they do not have any right to make a decision out of their own will. Therefore, Muslims cannot enact any law in their country which is contrary to the Qur’ān and Sunnah or without taking into consideration the guidance these sources provide. While remaining subservient to these, however, they have been bound to fully listen and obey to any directive given to them by their rulers.

2. **The Real Responsibility**
   
   The real responsibility of a state which is based on this principle of obedience to Allah and His Prophet (sws) is to consign the trusts of the nation on the basis of merit to people and to strive to establish justice in its ultimate form in every walk of life.

3. **Religious Obligations**
   
   The religious obligations imposed on a state are establishing the system of ṣalāh, disbursing zakāh, enjoining maʿrūf and forbidding munkar. In order to fulfill these religious obligations, following are the directives given by the Qurʾān and Sunnah:

   i. The Muslim citizens shall be bound to say their prayers as an attestation to their belief in Islam.
ii. The address of the Friday prayer shall be delivered by the head of state and he shall lead this prayer in the central congregational (jāmi‘) mosque of the capital. The provincial governors shall be entrusted with this job in the provinces, while government representatives shall discharge this duty in the various administrative units.

iii. A Muslim citizen who is liable to pay zakāh on his wealth, produce and livestock shall necessarily take out the stipulated amount from his money and pay it to the government. The government in return, besides catering for other expenditure, shall strive its very best to fulfill the needs of its deprived citizens through this money, reaching out to them before they come to it.

iv. For the enjoining of ma‘rūf (the good) and the forbidding of munkar (the evil), the Qur’ānic directive is that the state should constitute a group of people which, in accordance with the bounds prescribed for them, shall constantly strive to call people towards good and forbid them from evil.

4. Rights of Citizenship

If the Muslim citizens of the state diligently adhere to the prayer and pay zakāh, then they shall be entitled to all the rights which as Muslims they should have in their state: they shall be like brothers to each other, there will be no discrimination between them in the eyes of the law, among the positive requirements of Islam, nothing except the prayer and zakāh will be forcibly imposed on them and the state can in no way commit any excess against their life, wealth, honour, and freedom of expression.

5. State System
The rulers and the government shall be elected by the people and even after assuming this position of authority, they will not have the right to overrule a consensus or a majority opinion of the Muslims.
IV. The Economic Sharī‘ah

The economic *sharī‘ah* has been revealed by the Almighty through His last Prophet (sws) for the purification of the economy. It is based on the Qur’ānic philosophy of creation. According to this philosophy, the Almighty has created this world as a trial and test for man; every person has therefore been made to depend on others for his living. No one in this world can live independently as regards his needs and requirements. A person of the highest rank is dependent on others and people have to turn to even the most ordinary to fulfill them. In other words, every single person has an important role to play and no person can live a life independent of others as far as his needs are concerned. The Almighty has blessed people with varying abilities, intelligence and inclinations as well as with varying means and resources. In fact, it is because of this variation that a society comes into being. In such a society, if, on the one hand, there are scholars and sages whose knowledge enlightens the whole world, writers whose works give eternal life to words and their meanings, researchers whose unique researches are praised by the whole society, leaders whose acumen resolves many problems of the collectivity, reformers whose efforts create self-awareness in mankind and rulers whose resolve and determination change the course of history,
then on the other hand, the same society also has workers whose hard work produces marvels from machines, tillers of the soil whose relentless labour results in bumper crops, cooks whose adept cookery savours our taste-buds, artisans whose craftsmanship builds astounding sky scrapers and janitors with whose efforts the whole society breathes in a healthy atmosphere.

By creating various classes of people, the Almighty is testing whether the big and the small, the high and the low form a noble and healthy society or go about trying to create utter disorder in the world by showing foolishness and creating mischief against one another and in this way are humiliated in this world and also becoming worthy of punishment in the Hereafter.

It is to salvage man in this trial that the Almighty has guided him through His Prophets and revealed this economic *sharī‘ah* to cleanse and purify him.

Following is a summary of this *sharī‘ah*:

1. **Sanctity of Ownership**
   If a Muslim has paid his *zakāh* dues, then his rightfully owned wealth cannot be usurped or tampered with in any way, except if on account of some violation sanctioned by the religion of God and his Prophet (sws). So much so, a government has no authority to impose any tax other than *zakāh* on its Muslim citizens without their consent.

2. **Public Sector**
   Wealth and assets which are not in the ownership of an individual or cannot be in his ownership should remain in the ownership of the state so that this wealth should not get concentrated among the rich and that it be directed to those sectors of the society which are
dependent on others for their needs. Similarly, certain obligations of the state can also be fulfilled through this means.

3. Usurpation of Wealth

It is prohibited to devour other people’s wealth and property by unjust means. Gambling and interest are some horrendous forms of usurpation. Other economic activities should also stand permissible or prohibited in the light of this principle.

4. Documentation and Evidence

In affairs such as various financial transactions, making a will and acquiring a loan, the parties involved should write down a document and call in witnesses on the contract written. An indifference to this can at times lead to great moral misconduct.

Following are its directives:

i. Whenever a loan is acquired for a certain period, the transaction should be written down in the form of a document.

ii. This document should be written down in a just manner by some scribe in the presence of both the parties.

iii. The responsibility of writing down the document rests on the borrower. He should mention in the document the name of the person from whom he has borrowed and the amount he has borrowed from him.

iv. If the borrower is naïve, feeble or is not in a position to write down the document, then his guardian or attorney should have it written down on his behalf with justice and fairness.

v. Two male witnesses should testify over this document. These witnesses should be those who are
known to or have a close link with the parties and should be honest and trustworthy and of sound character.

vi. If two male Muslims having the said qualities are not available, then one man and two women can be selected to fulfill this responsibility. The requirement for two women is because a woman who is generally used to the environment of a home may become nervous in the environment of a court room and it is in order to protect her evidence from doubt and uncertainty that another woman comes to her help and support.

vii. People who have borne witness to a document should not desist from giving their testimony when they are called upon to do so.

viii. Everyday loans and transactions are not required to be written down. Witnesses, however, should be called upon important deals and transactions to resolve any disputes that may arise.

ix. It is not proper for a party to harm the scribe or the witness if a dispute arises.

x. If a person is on a journey and no scribe is available to document the transaction of loan then the borrower can place something in possession of the lender as a security. However, this permission to the lender to accept such pledges is strictly dependent on the fact that the lender does not find himself in a trustworthy situation. As soon as such a situation arises, the Almighty has directed the lender to return the pledged item and call in witnesses over the transaction of loan.

xi. If death stares a person in his face and he has to make a will regarding his wealth, then he should call in two just witnesses from among his Muslim brethren.

xii. If death approaches him during a journey, and two
Muslim witnesses are not available there, then as a last resort he can call in two non-Muslim witnesses.

xiii. If there is a possibility that those selected from among the Muslims as witnesses might show some bias to someone by altering their testimony, then as a precautionary measure, they can be held back after a congregational prayer in the mosque and be asked to swear by Allah that they will not alter their testimony for some worldly gain or in partiality of someone even if he be their close relative, and, if they do some alteration, then they will be sinners.

xiv. The witnesses should know that this testimony is the testimony of Allah. So even if they are dishonest in the slightest way, it would mean that they are dishonest not only to their brethren but also to the Almighty.

xv. In spite of this, if it comes to surface that contrary to the will made by the deceased these witnesses have shown bias to someone or infringed upon the rights of someone, then two persons from among the people who have become the victim of this injustice should stand up and swear that they are truer than the previous witnesses; that they have not committed any excess in this regard and that they will be wrongdoers before the eyes of Allah if they do so.

xvi. It is likely that after this further measure of accountability, the witnesses will not give a false testimony for they will have the fear hovering over them that if they commit any wrong, others will negate their oaths and in spite of being given preference, their oaths will be refuted.
5. Distribution of Inheritance

The wealth of every Muslim must necessarily be distributed after his death among his heirs in the following manner:

If the deceased has outstanding debts to his name, then first of all they should be paid off from the wealth he has left behind. After this, any legacies he may have bequeathed should be paid. The distribution of his inheritance should then follow.

No will can be made in favour of an heir ordained by the Almighty except if his circumstances, or the services rendered by him or his needs in certain situations call for it.

After giving the parents and the spouses their shares, the children are the heirs of the remaining inheritance. If the deceased does not have any male offspring and there are only two or more girls among the children, then they shall receive two-thirds of the inheritance left over, and if there is only one girl, then her share is one-half. If the deceased has only male children, then all his wealth shall be distributed among them. If he leaves behind both boys and girls, then the share of each boy shall be equal to the share of two girls and, in this case also, all his wealth shall be distributed among them.

In the absence of children, the deceased’s brothers and sisters shall take their place. After giving the parents and spouses their shares, the brothers and sisters shall be his heirs. The proportion of their shares and the mode of distribution shall be the same as that of the children stated above.

If the deceased has children or if he does not have children and has brothers and sisters, then the parents
shall receive a sixth each. If he does not even have brothers and sisters and the parents are the sole heirs, then one-third of his wealth shall be given to the mother and two-thirds to the father.

If the deceased is a man and he has children, then his wife shall receive one-eighth of what he leaves, and if he does not have any children, then his wife’s share shall be one-fourth. If the deceased is a woman and does not have any children, then her husband shall receive one-half of what she leaves and if she has children, then the husband’s share is one-fourth.

In the absence of these heirs, the deceased can make someone an heir. If the person who is made an heir is a relative and has one brother or one sister, then they shall be given a sixth of his share and he himself shall receive the remaining five-sixth. However, if he has more than one brother or sister, then they shall be given a third of his share and he himself shall receive the remaining two-thirds.

The basis of this distribution of inheritance is the “benefit of kinship” and the reason for the difference in the share of the heirs is also because their benefit for the deceased varies. Since the benefit of a girl after her marriage is transferred to her husband, similarly, a wife gives companionship to her husband whereas the husband not only gives companionship to her, he is also responsible to provide for her, hence the share of a boy is twice of a girl and the share of a husband is twice that of a wife.
V. The Sharī‘ah of Preaching

An important requirement of religion is that its followers should also continue to urge others to adopt it. It is this requirement of religion for which the terms da‘wah (preaching) and tablīgh (propagation) are used. A study of the sharī‘ah of preaching mentioned in the Qur’ān shows that the responsibility of preaching has been imposed in distinct categories on the believers according to their various capacities.

For convenience of understanding, the sharī‘ah of preaching can be categorized as follows:

1. Preaching Obligation of Muḥammad (sws)

All prophets of God were sent to call people to God and to warn and to give glad tidings to them. Their obligation of handing out warnings to the rejecters and giving glad tidings to the believers does not require any explanation. However, from among these anbiyā (prophets), those who were given the status of rusul (messengers) by the Almighty, their indhār (warnings), according to the Qur’ān, culminated in shahādah. In the terminology of the Qur’ān, shahādah means that the truth is communicated to people in such a manner that no one is left with an excuse to deviate from it. The way this shahādah is established is that the Almighty selects these rusul and then, before the actual Day of reward and
punishment, rewards and punishes people through them in this world. These *rusul* are told that if they honour their covenant with God they will be rewarded in this world and if they dishonour it, they will be punished here. The result of this is that these *rusul* become signs of God, and it is as if people see God walking along with the *rusul* who deliver His verdicts. Moreover, these *rusul* are directed to propagate the truth they have seen through their mind’s eye and with full certainty deliver to people the exact guidance of God they have received. This is *shahādah*. Once the preaching obligation of the *rusul* after passing through the phases of *indhār* (warning), *indhār-i ‘ām* (open warning), *itmām-i ḥujjah* (communication of the truth to the extent that the addressees are left with no excuse to deny it) and *hijrah* and *barā’a* (migration and acquittal) culminates in the establishing of *shahādah*, it becomes a basis for the Judgement of God both in this world and in the next. Consequently, the Almighty grants supremacy to these *rusul* and punishes the rejecters of this preaching in this very world.

2. Preaching Obligation of Abraham’s Progeny

The nature of their preaching is the *shahādah* (bearing witness to the truth) described above. The Qur’ān specifies that just as the Almighty chooses certain great personalities from among the progeny of Adam for *shahādah*, on similar lines, He also chose the progeny of Abraham (sws) for the responsibility of *shahādah*, and directed it to make an effort to fulfill all the requirements of this position.

It is because of this status of the progeny of Abraham (sws) that if it adheres to the truth in its collective
capacity, and keeps presenting it to other peoples of this world with full certainty and while maintaining full integrity of its contents, the Almighty will grant them dominiance over their addressees who reject them. On the other hand, if the progeny of Abraham (sws) does not adhere to the truth in its collective capacity, then the Almighty through these very addressees will mete out the punishment of humiliation and subjugation to them.

3. Preaching Obligation of Scholars

After the Prophet Muhammad (sws), his obligation of indhār has been transferred to the scholars of the Muslim ummah. The Almighty has said that some people from each group should come forward to gain sound knowledge of religion and try to save their people from the punishment of the Hereafter through warning and admonition.

It is evident from the Qur’ān that in this preaching obligation of the scholars the following aspects must always remain in mind:

Firstly, scholars should have so much faith in the truth they go about preaching that it should be the voice of their hearts and the call of their souls. Only after totally submitting themselves to the Almighty should they enter this field, and should declare that with all their heart and soul that they have professed faith in what they are calling people to.

Secondly, there should be no contradiction between what they believe and what they actually do. Whatever ideology or truth they want to preach others should first be practiced by them.

Thirdly, they should never show a compromising
attitude about the truth. The smallest of truths about religion that becomes evident to them should be wholeheartedly accepted by them; their tongue should bear witness to it and they should present it to the world disregarding the reproaches of a reproacher.

Fourthly, the Qur’ān should be the means of indhār they should adopt. The Qur’ān directed the Prophet Muḥammad to do so and for this very reason, the Prophet (sws) is a nadhīr (warner) for the whole world, and the scholars of religion actually communicate his indhār to people.

4. Preaching Obligation of the Rulers
If in a certain piece of land, Muslims are able to gain political independence, then it is their responsibility that they should depute some people from among themselves who should call people towards righteousness, enjoin good and forbid evil. After the formation of government, this obligation is imposed on their rulers. It is incumbent upon them that besides discharging all other natural duties which relate to the state, they also necessarily discharge this duty.

5. Preaching Obligation of an Individual
The obligation of preaching of an individual is to urge one another to righteousness and forbid one another from evil. The sphere of this preaching is one’s immediate surroundings and one’s area of authority. A person is required to do this duty among his family, relatives and friends. In this category of preaching, the preacher and the preached are not distinct from one another. Every person at all times acts as a preacher as well as an addressee to this preaching. This responsibility should be discharged by a
father towards his son and a son towards his father, a husband towards his wife and a wife towards her husband, a brother towards his sister and a sister towards her brother, a friend towards his friend and a neighbour towards his neighbour – in short, a person should discharge it towards every person who has an immediate relation with him. When he sees that someone among them has adopted an attitude which is contrary to the truth, he should try to urge him according to his knowledge, capacity and ability to mend his ways. It is quite possible that while at one time of the day we deliver some truth to a person, and at another time, he does this very service to us. Today, we may urge a person to the right way and tomorrow that person might urge us to the same. In short, a Muslim should keep discharging this duty in his immediate circle whenever he gets the opportunity.

6. Strategy of Preaching

The strategy of preaching delineated below relates to all categories of preaching. The Qur’ān has mentioned it as a principle and it is based on the following three statutes:

Firstly, wisdom, kindly exhortation and sound discussion should permeate the tone of this preaching. By wisdom (ḥikmah) is meant the arguments present in the verses and kindly exhortation and sound discussion means urging the addressees through sincere reminders. The implication is that whatever is presented by a preacher should be supported by arguments and presented in the light of knowledge and intellect and he should not be aggressive and forceful in his presentation. His tone should reflect sincerity and affection. If the stage reaches that of debate and argument, then this
should be done in a most befitting manner. If the opponent becomes hostile and antagonistic, then instead of responding in an even more belligerent manner, a true preacher should always remain polite and civilized.

Secondly, the responsibility of a preacher is that of preaching only: he should communicate the truth and elucidate it, and in no way show any slackness in urging and exhorting people towards it. If he discharges this responsibility in a befitting manner, he fulfills an obligation. It is the Almighty Who decides to give guidance to a person or to lead him astray. He knows full well those who have erred and also those who are rightly guided. He shall thus deal with a person in a manner he is worthy of. A preacher should not try to force the truth on others nor should he give verdicts about the fate a person shall meet in the Hereafter. This is the sole prerogative of the Almighty, and the only responsibility of a preacher is to communicate the truth, and he must not exceed this.

Thirdly, if the addressees of preaching resort to oppression and inflict harm on the preacher, he is allowed to avenge it in a proportion commensurate with the harm inflicted while remaining within moral limits; however, in the eyes of God, it is better that a person bear this oppression with perseverance. This perseverance implies that preachers should bear every hardship but refrain from avenging it; nor should they change their stance after being overwhelmed with hardships. Those who show perseverance at these instances are promised great rewards. Not only will they face its good consequence in this world, they will also, God willing, encounter good consequences in the Hereafter.
VI. The Sharīʻah of Jihād

Peace and freedom are two essential requirements of a society. Just as various penal measures help in protecting a society from the evils and excesses committed by an individual, resorting to armed offensives sometimes becomes essential to curb the evils perpetrated by countries and nations. As long as diplomatic relations and negotiations can be used to resolve matters, no one would endorse the use of force for settling affairs. However, if a nation threatens to disrupt the peace and freedom of the world and its arrogance and haughtiness exceed all bounds, and it no longer remains possible to bring it back on track through counsel and advice, it becomes the inalienable right of humankind to forcibly stop its subversive activities until peace and freedom of the world are restored. The Qurʼān asserts that if the use of force had not been allowed in such cases, the disruption and disorder caused by insurgent nations would have reached the extent that the places of worship where the name of God is taken day and night would have become deserted and forsaken, not to mention the disruption of the society itself.

It is for this purpose that jihād is undertaken in the Islamic sharīʻah.11 It must not be undertaken to gratify

11. The literal meaning of jihād is to strive for a cause with full
one’s whims nor to obtain wealth or riches. It must also not be undertaken to conquer territories and rule them or to acquire fame or to appease the emotions of communal support, partisanship and animosity. Jihād cannot be undertaken for a person’s selfish motives nor to satisfy his ego. This is the war of the Almighty that His servants undertake at His behest according to the guidelines provided by Him for His cause. They themselves act as mere agents and instruments of the will of God. They have no objective of their own before them in this undertaking; rather they have to fulfill the objectives of the Almighty. Consequently, they cannot deviate in the least from this capacity:

Following is the sharī‘ah of jihād:

1. Directive of Jihād

The directive of using force is given to Muslims in their collective capacity. All verses of the Qur’ān which mention this directive do not address Muslims in their individual capacity. Like the verses which mention punishments, these verses too address the Muslims as a community. Thus any step which is to be taken for use of force must originate for their collective system. No person or group among them has the right to take a step on its own in this regard on behalf of the Muslims.

2. Objective of Jihād

According to the Qur’ān, jihād is carried out primarily to root out persecution (to force and oppress a person to force. In the Qur’ān, it is used in this general sense as well as in the sense of an armed offensive in the way of Allah. Here, this second meaning is implied.
give up his religion). All forms of oppression against the life and wealth as well as freedom of opinion and expression of Muslims – should be considered under it in various degrees. Consequently, it can be launched to curb oppression and injustice whatever be their forms.

3. When does Jihād become Obligatory?

Jihād does not become obligatory on Muslims unless their military might reaches a certain extent in relation to that of their enemies. Thus it is essential that in order to fulfill this obligation of jihād not only should Muslims develop their moral fibre, they should also increase their military might which in the times of the Prophet keeping in view the circumstances of those times was regarded by the Qur’ān to be 1:2 between Muslims and their enemies.

4. Participation in Jihād

Only in that case will a person be sinning in not participating in jihād when he does not respond to the appeal of a Muslim state when it calls out to every Muslim to participate in it. In such situations, it indeed becomes a sin as great as hypocrisy. In the absence of this situation, taking part in jihād indeed is a means of earning great reward the desire of which should be in the heart of every Muslim; however, it does not become an obligation ignoring which can make him a sinner.

5. Running away from the Battlefield

Deserting the battlefield of jihād because of cowardice is totally forbidden. No believer should show such feebleness. It is tantamount to showing distrust in Allah, giving priority to this world over the next and trying to make life and death dependent upon one’s own strategy.
– all of which cannot exist with true faith.

6. Moral Limits
War cannot be waged in the way of Allah by disregarding ethical limits. Moral values have to be given priority over everything in all circumstances, and, even in circumstances of war, the Almighty has not given any person the permission to breach ethical principles. The most important directive that has been spelled out in this regard in the Qur’ān is the fulfillment of promises. Breaking a promise is a great sin in the eyes of the Almighty. Consequently, even if a nation, with which Muslims are under obligation of a contract, is guilty of oppressing the Muslims in matters of their religion, the Islamic state does not have the right to help these Muslims if this amounts to a breach of contract made with that nation. Similarly, people who want to remain neutral in war should be left alone and not be troubled in any way.

A display of pomp and arrogance should be avoided when an army sets out for a battle. Vanity and conceit are not befitting for the believers. Whether in the battlefield or outside it, the humility of servitude to the Almighty should always be their hallmark.

7. Divine Help
Muslims indeed wage such war by reposing their trust in the Almighty; however, the Qur’ān has made it clear that what entitles people to Divine Help is perseverance and resolution. No group of Muslims becomes entitled to it unless it has this quality in it.

8. Prisoners of War
Muslims can set free prisoners of war, and also take
ransom to set them free; however, according to the Qur’ān, they can neither kill them nor keep them as slaves come what may.

9. Spoils of War
The spoils of war are essentially reserved for the collective requirements of the Muslims. The combatants of the Muslim army have not been granted any eternal share in the spoils of war by the Almighty. In this regard, a state has discretionary powers which it can exercise keeping in view their circumstances and the society they live in.
VII. The Penal Sharī‘ah

The opportunity a man has to exercise his will is one of the greatest favours the Almighty has blessed him with. However, just as this freedom is a source of honour for him, its misuse is a source of dishonour for him because from every instance of misuse emanates evil and disorder. In the history of mankind, the first manifestation of this evil took place through the hands of Cain, the son of Adam. Consequently, out of this incident arose the need to protect man from the evil of man. It was evident from the norms of sense and reason vested by the Almighty in human nature that the only way to shield man from such evil was to reform his environment and to educate and instruct people and to administer appropriate punishment. However, what should be the nature and extent of punishment for a specific crime? Since there is no basis in human intellect to determine these parameters, the Almighty Himself revealed His directives about these issues. Through His Prophets, He gave mankind His sharī‘ah, in which, besides other decrees, He divinely ordained the punishments of all the grave crimes concerning life, wealth, honour and the collective system of a society.

These major crimes are:
1. Muḥārabah and spreading anarchy
2. Murder and Injury
3. Theft
4. Fornication
5. Qadhf (accusing someone of Fornication)

These are the crimes whose punishments have been divinely ordained by the sharī‘ah. The punishments of lesser forms of the crimes mentioned above, and the punishments of other crimes have been left by the sharī‘ah to the discretion of those in authority with one exception: the death sentence, according to the Qur’ān, can only be given to a person who has killed someone or to someone who is guilty of spreading anarchy in the society. Similarly, it is evident that the directives of meting out these punishments are not addressed to the Muslims in their individual capacity; they relate to the whole society and as such they are addressed to the state authorities.

In the following paragraphs, these punishments shall be explained.

1. Muhārabah and Spreading Anarchy

If, in the life of the Prophet (sws), people adopted a rebellious attitude against any of his directives or against his government, then this attitude is termed as muhārabah against God and His messenger. Similarly, spreading anarchy (fasād fī al-ard) is a term which refers to the situation when an individual or a group of individuals rebels against law of the land, the sharī‘ah of the Almighty and attacks the life, wealth, honour and freedom of expression of people. Consequently, when murder takes the form of terrorism, fornication becomes rape and theft assumes the shape of robbery or people take to
prostitution, become notorious for their ill-ways and vulgarity, become a threat to honourable people because of their immoral and dissolute practices, or rise against the government in rebellion, or create a law and order situation for the government by causing destruction, by becoming a source of terror and intimidation for people, by indulging in hijacking and by committing similar grave offences, then this is called spreading anarchy.

The following four punishments are specifically prescribed for such criminals:

i. They should be killed in an exemplary manner.

ii. They should be crucified in an exemplary manner.

iii. Their limbs should be amputated from opposite sides.

iv. They should be exiled.

Some stipulations about these punishments which constitute certain bounds and limits for them have been mentioned in the *sharī'ah* as follows:

Firstly, the Qur’ān has given an Islamic government the flexible authority to administer any of these punishments keeping in view the nature and extent of the crime, the circumstances in which it has been committed and the consequences which it produces or can produce in a society. The relatively lighter punishment of exile is placed with the two very severe punishments of killing or crucifying people in exemplary way so that if circumstances are such that the criminal deserves any leniency, he should be given it.

Secondly, if a gang of criminals has committed the crime, the punishment shall not be given to only some of the criminals but to the gang as a whole. Consequently, if a gang of criminals by spreading anarchy is guilty of such crimes as murder, hijacking, fornication, sabotage
and intimidating people and similar crimes, there is no need to investigate exactly who among the gang actually committed the crime. Every member of the gang shall be held responsible for it and dealt with accordingly.

Thirdly, while inflicting punishment upon such criminals no feelings of sympathy should arise. The Almighty who created them has ordained complete disgrace and humiliation for them, if they commit such crimes. This is the very purpose of these punishments and should always be taken in consideration.

Fourthly, if such criminals come forward and give themselves up to the law before the government lays hands on them, then they shall be dealt with as common criminals. They will not be regarded as criminals of muḥārabah or spreading anarchy.

2. Murder and Injury
   Taking qisāṣ12 for murder and injuries is an obligation imposed by the Almighty on an Islamic State. It guarantees survival to a society and for Muslims it is, in fact, a Divine Law which can only be breached by those who wrong their souls. Consequently, it is the responsibility of the government that if someone is killed within its area of jurisdiction it should search for the murderers, arrest them and take qisāṣ from them stipulated by law.

12. Qisāṣ is from qaṣāṣ which means to follow someone along his footsteps. From this meaning, it was used for the punishment in which the criminal is treated in the same way as he himself had treated the other person while committing the crime. In its general meaning, it is used both for qisāṣ in life and qisāṣ in wealth in the Arabic language.
Complete equality should be observed in taking qisāṣ. Hence, if the murderer is a slave, only that particular slave should be executed and if the murderer is a free man, only that particular free man should be executed. A person’s social status should never create an exception to this rule of equality nor should it be given any weight in this regard.

If the heirs of the slain or wounded person do not demand life for life, limb for limb wound for wound and want to show lenience to the criminal then a judge can give him a lesser punishment keeping in view the nature and extent of the crime and the circumstances in which it was committed. This is a favour and rebate by the Almighty to the criminal. Consequently, if the heirs of the slain or wounded show this compassion, then this shall become an atonement (kaffārah) for their sins before the Almighty.

In this case, the heirs of the slain or wounded person will be given diyat. The Almighty has said that it should be given according to the custom of the society and with kindness and goodwill.

If someone is unintentionally murdered and the murdered person is a Muslim citizen of a Muslim State or if he is not a citizen of an Islamic state but belongs to a nation with which a treaty has been concluded, it is necessary for the murderer who has not been forgiven to pay diyat according to the custom of the society and as an atonement for his sin repent before the Almighty and free a Muslim slave as well. However, if the murdered person is a Muslim belonging to an enemy country, the murderer is not required to pay diyat; in this case, it is enough that he only free a Muslim slave to wash his sin.
In both these cases, if the criminal does not have a slave, he should consecutively fast for two months.

3. Fornication

The man or woman who has committed fornication, both shall receive a hundred stripes if their crime is proven in a court of law.

The criminal should be given this punishment publicly to humiliate him in front of the people, and to make him a lesson for those present. The Qur’ān directs the government of the Muslims or their courts of justice to not show any lenience in this regard.

After this punishment has been carried out, no chaste man or woman should marry men and women who commit fornication. The Almighty has forbidden such marriages.

This prescribed punishment is the utmost punishment, which should be given only when the crime has been committed in its ultimate form and the criminal does not deserve any lenience as far as the circumstances of the crime are concerned. Consequently, criminals who cannot bear the punishment, have been compelled by circumstances, are without the necessary protection required to abstain from committing a crime are all exempt from this punishment.

4. Qadhf

There can be two forms of qadhf:

Firstly, a person accuses a chaste and righteous woman or man of fornication.

Secondly, such an accusation takes place between a husband and wife.

In the first case, the law of Islam is that the accuser
shall have to produce four eye-witnesses. If the accuser fails to produce them, he shall be regarded as guilty of *qadhf*. The punishment for such a criminal is that he shall be administered eighty stripes and his testimony shall never be accepted in future in any matter. The Qurʾān says that such criminals shall be regarded as the defiant in the eyes of God except if they repent from their crime and reform themselves.

In the second case, if no evidence is available, the matter shall be decided by pledging oaths. The husband shall swear four times by Allah that he is truthful in his accusation and the fifth time he shall swear that the curse of Allah be on him if he is lying. In response, if the wife does not defend herself in anyway, the prescribed punishment of fornication will be administered to her. However, if she refutes the allegations, she shall only be acquitted from the punishment if she swears four times by Allah that the person is lying and the fifth time she says that the wrath of Allah be on her if he is telling the truth.

The same procedure shall be adopted if the wife accuses the husband.

5. Theft

The punishment of amputating the hands is prescribed for a thief. Whether the thief is male or female, if the crime is proven in a court of law, then his or her hand shall be cut from the wrist. Like the punishment of fornication, this punishment is also the utmost punishment and should only be administered when the criminal does not deserve any lenience as far as the nature and circumstances of his crime are concerned.
VIII. The Dietary Sharīʿah

The objective of Islam is to purify all aspects of human life and soul. It therefore insists that besides cleansing the inner-self from contamination, care must be exercised in the intake of food and drinks. Only the ritually clean among them should be eaten and drunk. Man’s own nature generally provides him with ample guidance in this matter and, without any hesitation, he is able to decide the right course. He very well knows that lions, tigers, elephants, eagles, crows, vultures, kites, snakes, scorpions and human flesh itself are not meant to be eaten. He is also well aware of the fact that horses and mules are a means of transportation and have no role in satisfying one’s hunger. That faeces and urine of animals are impure things is known to him very well also. His reason and intellect generally guide him very well regarding the filth of intoxicants too. Consequently, in this matter, the Islamic sharīʿah has left it to the innate guidance found in human nature to lead the way.

No doubt, at times, human nature becomes perverted but a study of human behaviour shows that a large number of people do not falter in this matter. It is for this reason that the sharīʿah has not given any original guidance in this matter. In this regard, the sharīʿah has provided guidance regarding animals and on things
related to animals where human beings were liable to falter. The pig is a quadruped beast of the same genre as the goat, sheep, cow and cattle; however, it consumes meat like other carnivores. Should it then be considered forbidden or not? Should animals which are slaughtered in a way that all their blood is not drained out be eaten or not? Is the blood of such animals impure as indeed are their faeces and urine? If animals are slaughtered by taking the name of someone other than the Almighty, can they still be eaten? Since man is unable to come up with a decisive answer to these questions, therefore the Almighty guided him in this affair through His prophets and informed him that the flesh of the pig, blood, the flesh of dead animals and animals which are slaughtered in the name of someone other than Allah are also impure and unclean and therefore people should abstain from them.

Following are the various aspects of this directive which are mentioned in the Qur’ān:

1. No discrimination will be made between an animal who dies a natural death and an animal which suffers an accidental death. The meat of both these animals is prohibited. An animal hunted down by a wild beast is prohibited except if it is found alive and then slaughtered in the ceremonial way (dhikh).

2. If an animal trained for hunting cuts open a prey and the prey dies before one gets a chance to slaughter it in the prescribed way, then this cutting open of a prey by such a trained animal is tantamount to tadhkiyah, and therefore the prey can been eaten even if it has not be slaughtered in the prescribed way with one condition: the trained animal has preserved the prey for his master and
has not eaten from it. In case it has, then such a prey must not be eaten.

3. An animal which is slaughtered at an altar of a shrine is also prohibited. Similarly, an animal which is slaughtered such that no name other than Allah is invoked on it but the name of Allah is also not positively invoked while slaughtering is also prohibited. The same prohibition applies for a slaughtered animal and prey on which although the name of Allah is taken but the person who takes this name does not believe in God or associates partners with God and originally subscribes to polytheism as his religion.

4. It is only in compelling circumstances that one is allowed to benefit from these prohibited food items and that too with the conditions that a person neither craves for them nor crosses the bounds by going beyond his essential need.
IX. Islamic Customs and Etiquette

The ways in which the inner inclinations of human beings become evident in various patterns of living and in various manifestations of culture and civilization are called customs and etiquette. No period of human civilization has remained devoid of them. We find them in currency and practice in the same manner and as a general tradition in every clan, culture and nation. Civilizations are mostly distinguished from one another because of them. The religions revealed to the Prophets of Allah also direct their respective believers to follow certain customs and etiquette. The objective of divine religions is purification of the soul. Consequently, these customs and etiquette have been chosen to fulfill this objective.

Following are these customs and etiquette:

1. Declaring Allah’s name before eating and drinking and using the right hand for the purpose.
   The first of these is to express gratitude to Allah for His bounties and to invoke His blessings and the second is to constantly remind us that those who are bestowed with the favours of Paradise will receive their account in their right hand on the Day of Judgement.

2. The ceremonial salutation ُسلام عليكم (al-salāmu ‘alaykum) and its response when people meet one another.
3. The ceremonial utterance 

\[\text{الحمد لله}
\]

(al-ḥamdullilāh: all gratitude is for Allah only) after sneezing and its response by saying 

\[\text{يارحمة الله}
\]

(yarhamukallāh: may Allah have mercy upon you) by those who hear it.

4. Saying the 

\[\text{الحديث}
\]

(ādhān) in the right ear of a new born and the 

\[\text{القامة}
\]

(īqāmah) in his left.

Sounding these words in the ear of a newborn is a symbolic expression of the fact that just as his parents have transferred their physical being to him, they have initiated the transfer of their spiritual being to him with words that convey the basic message of Islam.

5. Clipping the moustache.
6. Shaving the pubes.
7. Removing hair from under the armpits.
8. Cutting nails.
9. Circumcising the male offspring.
10. Cleaning the nose, the mouth and the teeth.
11. Cleaning the body after urination and defecation.
12. Taking the ceremonial bath after the menstrual cycle and the puerperal discharge.
13. Ceremonial bath after janābah.
14. Bathing a dead body, enshrouding it in coffin cloth and its burial.
15. The festivals of ‘Īd al-Fīṭr and ‘Īd al-Aḍḥā.
X. Oaths and Atonements

Pledging oaths carries a great significance in Islam. Keeping one’s word is a fundamental part of Islamic ethics. Oaths emphasize an assertion to the ultimate extent. When a Muslim swears by the Almighty on an intention or a plan that he wishes to carry out, it is as if he has called the Creator of the heavens and the earth to be a witness over his word. In spite of this importance that oaths and covenants occupy, many a time it becomes impossible for a person to honour his word or he may feel that fulfilling a certain oath might be instrumental in infringing the rights of the Almighty or of his own self or even of others. In such cases, one can break one’s oath. In fact, in some cases, breaking an oath becomes a moral and religious necessity. In the Islamic sharī‘ah, an atonement (kaffārah) has been prescribed for a broken oath. Following are directives given in this regard:

1. At times, an oath is totally absurd, nonsensical and meaningless. No doubt, a believer should refrain from pledging such oaths; however, it is a great favour and blessing of the Almighty that He will not hold people accountable for the fulfillment of such oaths, neither in this world nor in the Hereafter.

2. On the other hand, if an oath is pledged with a solemn will and intention or if some contract has been made on its basis or it has an effect on the rights and obligations of the
parties involved or it infringes upon the injunctions of the *sharī‘ah*, the Almighty would definitely hold a person responsible for it. So a person must not be careless and indiscreet in this matter. On the contrary, he should act in a very responsible manner in this regard.

3. If, owing to some reason, a person is forced to break such an oath, then he must atone for it. For this, he is required to feed ten poor people with the standard of food he normally feeds his own family or to give them clothes to wear or to liberate a slave. If he is unable to do either of these, he must fast for three days.
Islam: A Concise Introduction is a condensed version of Mizan, a comprehensive treatise on the contents of Islam by Javed Ahmad Ghamidi. The author himself has produced this abridgement. It is primarily a compilation of the conclusions reached by him in understanding the contents of Islam.