

IDEAL HUMAN SOCIETY: A REFLECTION ON ISLAMIC PRINCIPLES

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Abstract: The Qur'an declares that it is for the man and about the man(21:10). It addresses the man in his both capacities as an individual and as a social being. It seems very much concerned about the development of man from all angles, social, political, economic, educational, intellectual, cultural, moral, and spiritual (17:23-37). The society it seeks to develop and set up on the earth ensures peace and harmony among various sections of the setting (60:4-8). The salient features of the human society from the Islamic perspective are: (1) Total Submission to God, (2) Intellectual Freedom, (3) Material Prosperity, (4) Moral Upliftment, (5) Unity in Diversity, (6) Caring and Sharing Approach, (7) Honor to Human Rights, (8) Multi-Culturalism, (9) Full Blooming of Knowledge, and (10) Development of Man. This paper represents a humble reflection on these dimensions of human society as conceived by the Qur'an.

Keyword: Ideal Human, Submission to God, Multi-Culturalism.

1.Introduction

There is no denying the fact that the more the inclination of man towards modernism cum individualism the more the social problems such as parents-children conflict, unsuccessful matrimonial relationship, violation of human rights, juvenile delinquency, child-abuse, alcoholism etc. Efforts have been made and continue being made to overcome these problems by governments, organizations, social agencies and legal authorities but to no avail. It seems each and every single problem is looked at, studied and analyzed in isolation of other problems. Due to this piecemeal approach success remains elusive. Generally, the measures taken to resolve social problems are of curative or preventive or punitive nature. These measures, despite their efficacy, turn, at times, ineffective. It may be due to their improper application. If a problem where curative measure seems to be more effective is handled by punitive measure, the desired result may not be achieved. It seems, at times, very difficult to identify the most appropriate measure for a problem. In today's situation it seems to be more difficult because the social problems have reached the level where it is almost impossible to measure their magnitude and demarcate their boundaries. Islam also recommends for applying these measures to resolve social problems but only in a situation where sufficient orientational measures have already been taken. It seeks to orientate members of a society towards certain absolute

values and principles. It seeks to change thoughts as well as behavior. After it fashions a society on its pattern, it keeps eyes on how it works. If it experiences any problem therein, it prescribes any of the above-mentioned three measures to overcome it. Application of preventive, curative and punitive measures in social problems may not prove efficacious in the absence of social orientation. As a result of social orientation carried out by Islam society demonstrates certain characteristic features, which protect it from any problem whatsoever. Historically, whenever a society got patterned on Islamic values, it faced little difficulty in surmounting its social problems. This paper represents a humble attempt to identify and highlight those characteristic features of a human society, as conceived by the Qur'an, which ensure its freedom from social problems.

Characteristic Features of an Ideal Human Society

An ideal human society signifies a human setting where the social problems are rare and less serious. Such a society is not a utopia. It is historically real one. Time and again it got established on earth. It can still be set up. All the features of such an ideal society are available in Islamic sources, the *Qur'an* and life history of the last Prophet (s.a.w.). It is not possible to accommodate all the desirable elements of a successful society as featured in Islamic sources in the present article. For that matter a comprehensive book is needed. In this article only main features are intended to study.

1-Submission to God

Psychologically, man is obliged to submit either to the One True God, the Creator, the Sustainer, the Provider, the Sovereign, the Almighty, or to false deities, that man has himself imagined and developed in his belief as partners of the One God. Some men reject the idea of godhood; they neither subscribe to the concept of One True God nor accept the message about imaginary deities. Yet, they cannot escape submission to another category of false deity or deities. Such people submit to their impulses (25:43; 45:23) as well as to other men whom they consider superior to themselves (9:31). Thus, in reality there are only two choices: unity of God or plurality of gods. As for atheism, it is merely a fallacy; it does not exist in practical life. Islam invites man to believe in, love, obey and submit to the True One God (2:21).

Submission to God signifies total and unconditional obedience to God's commands. It is a life-long relationship man establishes with the Supreme Being. This relationship generates harmony in man's life. He, therefore, hardly falls victim to dejection, disappointment, and depression, which may cause several kinds of psychological and social problems. One of the highest forms of practical manifestation of man's submission to God is *solah* through which man several times a day reiterates his pledge to remain loyal to God, and prepares him mentally as well as physically for

demonstrating this commitment in his daily life. Consequently, he develops strength to easily fend off criminal mentality. It is an universally established fact that those who are sincere to One True God are sincere to their own selves as well as to their fellow beings around them. Man's commitment to Allah makes him commit to the society. Devotion to the Almighty creates a very healthy environment in the human settings. Love for God leads to love for humanity. Thus love, concern, commitment, and sincerity towards the society serve as keys to maintain integrity of human life. Surely, it is this wisdom that the *Qur'an* refers to *solah* as a shield with which man can comfortably defend himself against evil thoughts and actions.¹

A society subscribing to the concept of obedience to God is the least vulnerable to social problems. Unity of God, which serves as the basis for man's subservience to God, leads to unity of thought as well as unity of man. It is just as plurality of gods leads to disunity in thought and discrimination against members of a society merely on the basis of differences of color, cast, profession, and economic status. The members of a society where sincerity of commitment to One True God forms the basis of life-pattern live in total harmony and peace. Such a society may hardly find itself in a social dilemma. The Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) invited the people to submit to One True God in these words: "Say there is no deity but Allah, and blissful life is guaranteed is for you".² When the Arabs responded to the Last Prophet's call en-masse, strife-torn Arabian Peninsula turned into one unity, and the people therein experienced a new life in which the peace was the order of the day. During the first meeting between some people from pre-Islamic Madinah and the Prophet (s.a.w.), the former expressed their heartfelt wish to turn instability, insecurity, and volatility of situation in the city into stability, security to life, property and honor, as well as continuity of peace and tranquility: "We have left our people who are full of enmity and hatred against one another. Allah may unite them through you. After we go back to them, and call them to your message, which we have accepted. Should it happen that they accept it, you will be the most honorable person for them".³ History bears witness to it that the people of Madinah who were fed up of the life of insecurity and hostility accepted the message of God, submitted to Him unconditionally and wholeheartedly, and got united. What remained elusive for around a hundred years was achieved within no time only by accepting the supremacy of Allah theoretically and practically.

2-Intellectual Development and Freedom

Man is an intellectual being. He has been granted faculties to observe, analyze, and reflect (16:78; 17:36; 23:78; 32:9; 46:26; 67:23). The more the use of these powers the stronger the man becomes intellectually. If these are suppressed due to any reasons whatsoever, man will turn animal, which represents a life quite contrary to human standard. The *Qur'an* condemns this

disturbingly untoward situation: “*They have hearts wherewith they understand not; they have eyes wherewith they see not; they have ears wherewith they hear not. They are like cattle,-nay, more misguided: for they are heedless*”.⁴ Allah completely disapproves suspension of intellectual power man has been granted as the essential apparatus to safeguard his dignity as human being: “*The worst of creatures surely in the eyes of Allah are the deaf, the dumb, who do not use reason*”.⁵

Human situations are bound to reflect either intellectual freedom or intellectual slavery. The former is boon and the latter is bane of human society. Intellectual freedom leads to all kinds of development ensuring social awareness of the people. Intellectual slavery mars the development, thus causing the people to behave like animal beings. A society encouraging intellectual freedom to its members experiences man’s conquest of untouched vistas of knowledge.

Intellectual development as a result of intellectual freedom is a state of life where society hardly makes mistakes in its judgment on what is right and what is wrong. If an individual makes a mistake, others come forward to rectify it. Once ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab, second leader of Islamic state in Arabian Peninsula after the last Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (s.a.w.), made a decision to standardize the amount of dower due to abuse of this provision in the society, but his decision was criticized by a lady citing revealed words (4:20), which allows the people to enjoy freedom in this matter. It was this criticism, which made the Caliph review his decision.⁶

To follow others blindly is an undesirable approach. It snatches away from man his own freedom to think, choose and act. Arabs during pre-Islamic period had almost suspended their power of discernment, due to which they were unable to see true nature of things. When they were invited by the *Qur’an* to give up their abominable acts, they defended their position by the argument that they had inherited the traditions from their forefathers (2:170; 5:104; 7:28). It seems they had made their ancestors’ practices as criteria of something being right. Had they used their mind they would never have made the same observation.

The *Qur’an* makes it crystal clear that criminality is born from the non-use of mind (7:179). It exhorts its followers not to suspend their ability of reflection in any matter including purely religious ones: “*And they who, when reminded of the messages from their Lord, do not fall down deaf and blind*”.⁷ The *Qur’an* has warned mankind a number of times in these words: “*Will you not, then, use your reason?*” (e.g. 2:44, 76; 3:65; 6:32; 7:169 etc.). Qur’anic invitation to man to exercise his intellectual ability in every matter, big or small, indicates that human development rests mainly upon proper and constant application of reason.

3-Full Blooming of Knowledge

None can contest the idea that knowledge is light, which keeps its bearers to the right, and that ignorance is darkness, which invariably misguides its victim. Islam seeks to promote knowledge and stamp out ignorance from human life and thought. The very first revelation (96:1-5) the Prophet (s.a.w.) received consisted of the message concerning the significance of knowledge.⁸ It may, then, be said that the very basis of ideal human life as sought by the *Qur'an* is knowledge (*'ilm* and *ma'rifah*).

In Islamic society people are barred from expressing views on any matter without knowledge: *"And pursue not that of which you have no knowledge; surely the hearing and the sight and the heart-all of these-shall be questioned about that"*.⁹ It is because mere speculation may wreak havoc with social relationship. Knowledgeable personalities deserve lofty rewards (58:11) because they maintain equilibrium in the society thus protecting it from chaos and disorder.

Arabs who were addressed by the Prophet (s.a.w.) were almost illiterate. When he established a new society in Madinah based on Islamic principles, he made his effort as the leader to ensure that none remained illiterate. For that matter he had used expertise of even prisoners of war who were experts in the art of reading and writing Arabic language to teach Muslim children.¹⁰ After the demise of the Prophet (s.a.w.) the society in Arabian Peninsula witnessed emergence of new educational culture; almost every house and every mosque turned into centers of learning. It is noteworthy that the education in these seminaries was free and easily accessible. One can see that the first revelation served as foundation stone of the civilization Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) established in Arabian Peninsula. Followers of Islam traveled far and wide to acquire knowledge. The first ten centuries of Islamic civilization are the golden era of human history. During this period culture of obtaining knowledge dominated the world.

4-Honor to Human Rights

Human setting is essentially different from the environment animals dominate. Animals wrong one another because they have no way to recognize one another's rights. Man recognizes well position of each and every single individual around him. It is this recognition, which leads man to respect others' rights. De-recognition of and dishonor to human rights on the part of members of a society cause human society to turn into a jungle where individuals bully one another.

The *Qur'an* uses a comprehensive term "*ihسان*" referring to human rights of all the individuals in human society, particularly parents, next of kin, neighbor, spouses, and the less fortunate (4:36). *ihسان* signifies good treatment, generosity, kindness, cooperation, sympathy, benevolence etc.¹¹ Another major human right is justice. The *Qur'an* exhorts its followers to

uphold justice in their dealings (16:90). A society where every individual is aware of the significance of justice and its application in daily life may not easily face social problems. Justice is not merely a principle to be applied in the court of law; it is a rule, which governs every act of man. Once a companion of the Prophet (s.a.w.) requested him to bless one of his sons by handing him a particular gift he brought. The Prophet turned down the request on the ground that it was a discrimination against other children of the companion.¹²

Individual freedom occupies an important place in human life. Once a newly married woman expressed her desire to the Prophet (s.a.w.) to help her to get separated from her husband on the ground that he had beaten her severely, and the Prophet having realized the seriousness of the matter ordered the husband to divorce the woman.¹³ Islam honors individual freedom as long as it does not hurt others. When a Muslim woman who was married with several children got an opportunity, through a special legal provision, to choose between freedom from her husband and continuation of matrimonial relationship, she opted for freedom, which was honored by law.¹⁴

The last sermon of the Prophet (s.a.w.) appears to be a declaration on human rights. Its salient features are: 1) human life and property are inviolable, 2) a trust must be returned to its rightful owner, 3) usury based finance system is injustice hence it is to be abolished in its totality, 4) revenge killing (homicide) is forbidden and 5) spouses must respect one another's rights.¹⁵ Historically, before this speech the Prophet (s.a.w.) had already established in the Arab land a society featuring the above-mentioned provision of human rights. This sermon was not to introduce these features afresh but to remind the audience of what they had already been taught.

Many social problems, indeed, arise out of the human rights violation. If parents take notice of their children's rights; children honor their parents' rights; wife and husband are always mindful of each other's rights; and every individual respects others' rights, there may hardly be any chaos in the society.

5-Predominance of High Moral Values

Man is not a social animal as claimed by certain quarters. He is a human being endowed with moral dimension. His natural predisposition towards association with other individuals around him gives birth to society. This social bond makes it imperative for him to choose the most appropriate principles of behavior in his interaction with the society. Application of inappropriate principles of behavior leads to socio-moral problems. One of the fundamental differences between human and animal is that of morality. The higher the moral standards practiced by individuals the stronger the social fabric. Existence of moral values in an environment keeps social problems away.

Ja'far ibn Abi Talib, leader of Muslim immigrants in Abyssinia during the very period of the Last Prophet (s.a.w.) had briefed the king Negus how Islam revolutionized his and his fellow men in Makkah. His speech in the Negus' court sheds light on the two pictures, life before Islam and the life after Islam.¹⁶ The former represented a situation dominated by inhuman behavior such as adultery, dishonor to relative, injustice to neighbor and exploitation of the weak, and the latter introduced to universally upheld moral principles taught by Islam such as truthfulness, honesty, trustworthiness, safeguarding chastity, keeping promises, total abstinence from debauchery, perjury and false witnessing etc.

The *Qur'an* at many places sketches the image of individuals it seeks to develop in a society. Such individuals possess high moral character; they are humble, avoid conflict, keep away from wasteful spending as well as niggardliness, do not kill any one unjustly, do not commit sexual offence, never witness falsely, never get involved in what is frivolous, maintain their dignity, honor their promises and trusts, help others around them, and are always conscious of their responsibilities towards their children and subordinates (17:23-36; 23:1-10; 25:63-74 etc.).

The Prophet (s.a.w.) time and again would remind his followers of excellent human conducts. The following exhortation of the Prophet (s.a.w.) speaks volumes of his concern and effort to orientate the people towards an ideal approach and activities.

“Keep away from assumption as it represents worst lie; do not unnecessarily probe into others' life, do not spy on others, do not hate one another, do not play tricks against one another, do not develop jealousy against one another, do not harbor mutual enmity, and become, O servants of Allah, the brethren”.¹⁷

6-Material Prosperity and Well-Being

Poverty serves more often than not as a breeding ground for problems at both individual and social levels. Theft, robbery, misappropriation in orphan's property, fraud in monetary transaction etc. were common features of Arabian Peninsula before Islam. This situation seems to have been caused by the general poverty in the land. When the people submitted to Islamic values, they witnessed the emergence of a new phenomenon in which the poverty had no chance to creep into life.

Distribution of zakat-money among the people below the poverty line has been prescribed for the rich (9:60) so as to eradicate poverty and enable the needy to gradually become self-reliant. By declaring trade activities as legal (2:275), the *Qur'an* has actually invited rather encouraged people to develop and expand the trade infrastructure leading them to unprecedented prosperity.

The Prophet's (s.a.w.) statement—"the upper hand is better than the lower hand"¹⁸—discourages his followers from begging and encourage them to be self-sufficient. Once a man who had turned a professional beggar came to the Prophet (s.a.w.) begging him for monetary help. The Prophet got the beggar's bowel sold out and asked him to purchase an ax with which to cut wood and earn his livelihood by selling the wood in the market. The man acted upon the advice of the Leader (s.a.w.) and very soon became self-reliant.¹⁹

Islam takes many steps to prevent prosperity turning into poverty. It prohibits lavish spending as well as niggardliness (25:67). It prescribes a very well defined system of property distribution (4:11-14), which ensures non-concentration of wealth into few hands. Prosperity is very much dependent upon, among other things, rotation of wealth and its equitable distribution among the people concerned. Pre-Islamic Arabs, according to their decades old tradition, would bar minor children and female heirs of the deceased from inheriting the property, which would result in the orphans being thrown into the street to turn later on criminals. The law of inheritance as prescribed by Islam ensures no wrong doing to anyone.

Many virtuous acts such as feeding the hungry, helping the needy, expiation of certain acts (*kaffarah*), liberating slaves and bonded labors, building mosques, managing educational institutions, and other welfare programs, demand that the people work hard so as to be able to participate in the above-mentioned activities.

History stands witness to the fact that during the time of the second caliph, 'Umar ibn al-Khattab the subject became so prosperous that there were hardly found people who deserved to receive their share in charity. It means the unfortunate section of the society living at the poverty line and below it reached at par with other classes enjoying comfortable life.

7-Men and Women: Equitable Standing

Certain problems such as husband-wife conflict, sexism, wife bashing, abuse of female children and increase in divorce arise out of a misconception that woman is inferior to man. Man's superiority complex compels him to treat woman according to the dictates of his wish and whims hence exploitation of woman. In pre-Islamic Arabia woman was at one extreme of exploitation and in the modern times she is at another extreme of exploitation. In both the cases she is playing in the hands of man as a tool of pleasure, though the modern man names it woman's liberation.

According to Islamic scheme woman is neither a sex tool nor an object of pleasure for men in the society. It grants her highly honorable social positions of mother, wife, daughter, sister, friend, and co-partner in the life etc. just as it places man in the society as father, husband, son, brother, and co-partner. These two different sets of positions are complementary to each

other; none can exist in isolation of the other. Family constitutes society in miniature. Man and woman are co-players on the stage of that nucleus theatre of life. Family and society are bound to total failure if both man and woman are not provided equitable opportunities to play their respective role in their different capacities.

Man has certain rights and duties; woman has certain rights and duties. These rights and duties have been well defined in the light of their respective positions they hold in the family and society. Man has right to live and enjoy life, to own, sell and buy properties, to develop his own self intellectually and educationally, to contribute towards the growth of the society, to choose and determine profession, and to excel in every field of life including spirituality. Woman has been given the same rights. She is not behind the man in terms of her social, economic, educational, intellectual, political, religious and cultural rights. Man's rights over woman form the duties of woman and woman's rights over man form the duties of man. Thus none is superior or inferior to the other. Both are just like two wheels of the life-cart, which cannot be dragged only on the basis of one single wheel.

The *Qur'an*'s address 'O people' (*ya ayyuha al-nas*) include both man and woman. The *Qur'an* invites them both to build an ideal human civilization where none is wronged and everyone has easy access to all the opportunities to grow and excel (28:77).

8-Collectivism

Modern philosophy of individualism has undoubtedly given birth to innumerable problems turning human setting into animal grouping where every individual wants to seize the opportunity for himself/herself at the cost of others. In this approach individual is of prime value and the society is merely a tool to meet individual's ends. It is due to the influence of this principle that the society today is on the verge of its collapse.

Islam strikes balance between individuals and the society. It does not allow individuals to exploit the society nor it permits the society to block the progress of individuals. The society Islam has established on the earth and still cherishes to set up is based on collectivism according to which all the individuals share with and care for one another. An individual's problems become the problems of the entire society.

The Madinan Islamic society formed by the Prophet (s.a.w.) was a well-knit society, whose individuals were emotionally and mentally related to one another. The Prophet (s.a.w.) himself draws a picture of that society in these words: "See the believers; they are like one single body in their mutual interaction based on compassion, love and sympathy; when any of its organs suffers, the whole body falls sick with sleeplessness and fever".²⁰

Members of Islamic society form one single fraternity. The *Qur'an* declares: "All believers form a single brotherhood".²¹ It was this concept,

which made every individual of that society feel concerned about others. The dispute among Ja'far ibn Abi Talib, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib and Zaid ibn Harithah over the custodianship of the orphaned daughter of Hamzah ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib, who had been martyred in the battle of *uhud* is a spectacular example of collectivism in the society the Prophet had developed.²² It was not an isolated case of compassion and sympathy; the whole society invariably used to rise to help those who were in need.

Incidence of suicide is almost non-existent in Muslim society. It seems the main reason of the absence of this painful problem is the principle of collectivism. The individuals in a society based on the Qur'anic principles do suffer from mental tension and, at times, from depression but the state of their tension and depression is hardly as serious as to lead to total dejection, which ultimately serves as a prelude to self-killing/suicide. It is because the whole society comes to the rescue of the people concerned; individual problems turn collective problems that are resolved by collective effort.

The spirit of collectivism works as a catalyst overpowering the attitude of hatred, ill will, vengeance, backbiting, blackmailing, jealousy and rivalry. These negative feelings breed and grow only when the members of a society live in isolation of one another, and rarely interact among themselves.

9-Multi-Culturalism

Every society from the time immemorial consists of various elements reflecting multiplicity of color, cast, creed and culture. These different components are equally responsible for maintaining the integrity of the society. Their mutual understanding, tolerance, and respect of each other ensure peace and harmony. If they behave intolerably and disrespectfully among themselves, the social fabric is sure to get ruined. Communal hatred and intolerance lead to communal violence, extremism, and terrorism, thus putting the societal and national integrity and security at stake.

Islam does not allow its followers to coerce others into accepting its faith and life-principles (2:56). An Individual or a group of people with a faith other than Islam in a Muslim nation, who prefer to continue with their own belief-system and religious practices, have their right to do so without any fear of persecution at the hands of Muslim government, agencies or individuals. If they want to enter the fold of Islam voluntarily and consciously, they are most welcome.

Members of an Islamic society do not condemn or revile other religious and cultural entities' goddesses. The *Qur'an* exhorts them not to resort to such confrontational approach because it will hurt the feelings of non-Muslims and they may do tit for tat by using bad words for Allah (6:108), and this will most certainly enrage Muslims plunging the nation into chaos. Cooperation between Muslims and non-Muslims on certain common program is highly desirable.²³ The title non-Muslim is not synonymous with enemy.

The term enemy is applicable to those who, regardless of their ethnic, cultural and religious background, revolt against Allah and His law. Enmity (*kufr*, *shirk*, *nifaq*) against Islam is a qualified trait. It might be available even with someone or some people within the Muslim community itself (63:1-4). Relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims is based on kindness, reverence, beneficence, generosity, justice and probity (60:8).

The Prophet (s.a.w.) and his followers had established very close relationship with the Jews in Madinah. The historical agreement between Muslims and the Jews during the Prophet's (s.a.w.) life speaks volumes of the nature of relationship the Prophet wanted his followers and the people of the Book to develop. In the said agreement the Muslims and the Jews had been declared in no uncertain terms as the constituents of 'one ummah'. Jews, according to the accord, enjoyed full freedom to practice their own religion. Their life, property and honor were as sacred and inviolable as others' including Muslims'.²⁴

Conclusion

The Qur'an and the Last Prophet's traditions clearly show that the very objective of revelation from Allah is to seek formation of a society free from chaos, mischief, falsehood, frauds, criminal activities, and anti-social pursuits. The Last Prophet (s.a.w.) established a full-fledged ideal society in Arabian Peninsula. This society was entirely different from that before the advent of the Last Prophet (s.a.w.). The pre-Islamic Arabia represented all kinds of inhuman traditions—idol-worship, taking pleasure in killing humans, resorting to looting and plundering for financial strength, outraging the chastity of women in general and neighbor's wife in particular, depriving orphans of their rights in the inheritance, spending time, energy, and wealth in gambling, speaking lies, and causing injustice to the underprivileged. The Qur'an gave a clarion call to Arabs to change their life styles and when they accepted its message sincerely, the killers became defenders of human life, the plunderers became protectors of others' property, and dignity, the voluptuary profligate became guardians of chastity, and the greedy became charity givers. The society witnessed prevalence of sincerity of commitment to Allah, love, cooperation, altruism, sacrifice, justice, and generosity. Muslims the world over, whether in their individual capacity or from socio-political platforms are obliged to contribute toward the creation of human settings where everyone's life, property, and dignity are fully safe, where human values prevail, where none try to wrong the other, and where justice becomes order of the day. The Qur'an is still there to awaken the people; and the Prophet's traditions are fully able to redress the today's horrifying situation in the world.

REFERENCE & NOTES

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- ³. Ibn Hisham, *Al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah* (Dar Ihya’ al-Turath al-‘Arabi, Beirut, 1997), vol. 2, p. 42.
- ⁴. The Qur’an-7:179.
- ⁵. The Qur’an-8:22.
- ⁶. Al-Razi, Fakhr al-Din, *Mafatih al-Ghayb* (Dar Ihya’ al-Turath al-‘Arabi, Beirut, 1995), Vol. 4, p.13.
- ⁷. The Qur’an-25:73.
- ⁸. The first revelation (96:1-5) uses three terms, reading (*iqra*’), teaching (*‘allama*), and pen (*al-qalam*), referring very clearly to the entire process of acquiring knowledge.
- ⁹. The Qur’an-17:36.
- ¹⁰. Ahmad b. Hanbal, *Musnad* (Dar Ihya’ al-Turath al-‘Arabi, Beirut, 1994) vol. 1, report serial no. 2217.
- ¹¹. Al-Firozabadi, Muhammad b. Ya’qub, *Al-Qamus al-Muhit* (Dar Ihya’ al-Turath al-‘Arabi, Beirut, 1997), vol. 2, p. 1564. The original statement of the linguist is: “*ihsan* signifies all that is not offensive or hurtful”.
- ¹². Muslim, *Sahih* [along with the commentary of al-Nawawi], (Dar al-Ma’rifah, Beirut, 1997), vol. 6, kitab al-hibat, Hadith nos. 4153-4163.
- ¹³. Abu Da’ud, *Sunan* (Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 1996), vol. 2, kitab al-Talaq, Hadith no. 2228.
- ¹⁴. Ibn al-Athir, ‘Ali b. Muhammad, *Usd al-Ghabah fi Ma’rifat al-Sahabah* (Dar al-Ma’rifah, Beirut, 1997), vol. 5, pp. 228-229, serial no. 6777. The name of the woman is Barirah mawlat ‘A’ishah who was married, before her freedom from bondage, to another slave, Mughith.
- ¹⁵. For the full text please, see Ibn Hisham, *Al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah* (Dar Ihya’ al-Turath al-‘Arabi, Beirut, 1997) vol. 4, pp. 259-260.
- ¹⁶. Ibn Hisham, op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 373-374.
- ¹⁷. Al-Bukhari, Muhammad ibn Isma’il, *Sahih* (Dar Ihya’ al-Turath al-‘Arabi, Beirut, 1400 A.H.), vol. 4, kitab al-adab, Hadith no. 6066.
- ¹⁸. Al-Bukhari, *Sahih*, vol. 2, kitab al-wasaya, ÍadÊth no. 2750.
- ¹⁹. Abu Da’ud, *Sunan*, vol. 1, kitab al-zakat, Hadith no. 1641.
- ²⁰. Al-Bukhari, *Sahih*, vol. 4, kitab al-adab, Hadith no. 6011.
- ²¹. The Qur’an-49:10.
- ²². Al-Bukhari, *Sahih*, vol. 2, kitab al-sulh, Hadith no. 2699.
- ²³. It is clear from the Prophet’s (s.a.w.) appreciation of people’s alliance for peace, a historical event in Arabia before Islam, which is known as *hif al-fuzul*. For the detail see: Ibn Hisham, *Al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah*, vol. 1, pp. 169-172.
- ²⁴. Al-Buti, Muhammad Sa’id Ramazan, *Fiqh al-Sirah* (Dar al-Fikr, Damascus, 1990), pp. 204-205.