

Understanding the Seerah in the context of the Qur'an

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Introduction

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) lived 14 centuries ago in a culture and environment different from our culture today. He faced many problems and issues and how he reacted and behaved constitutes his Seerah or life story. How do we understand his Seerah? Do we look at his behavior in historical context and in the context of the Qur'an? Or do we take his literal words and his actions to be valid at all times?

The Qur'an is God's last Divine revelation to mankind. It will serve as a guidance till the Day of Judgment since there will be no new Divine books. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) also is the last of a series of human messengers and there will be no more messengers after him. Therefore, the Qur'an and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) should be viewed as ever-lasting and valid at all times. If this is the case then our understanding of the Qur'an and the teachings of the Prophet must be not restrictive but applicable to all cultures and all civilizations. This can only occur if we follow the concept and spirit of the Divine revelation and allow new interpretation suitable for a changing time. The Qur'an is not restrictive since it gives mainly guidelines and few details. The teachings of the Prophet (PBUH) however pose a problem if we understand it and apply it literally without regard to historical context and the context of the Qur'an. To illustrate this problem is the Hadeeth of the Prophet reported narrated in Muslim: (I have been commanded to fight An-Nas till they bear witness that there is only One God, Allah and that I am His messenger. If they do that then they protect their persons and possessions from me according to what is proper, and their accountability is with God). On surface this saying of the Prophet implies that he was ordered to fight all mankind till they submit to become Muslims, otherwise he is allowed to kill them and take away their possessions. This understanding is clearly wrong because it contradicts the teachings of the Qur'an that no one is to be forced to accept Islam against his will. An-Nas here does not refer to mankind but refers to the tribe of Quraish who were fierce enemies and fought the Muslim state in Madina on numerous occasions. This saying then when understood in historical context means that the Prophet was ordered to fight the enemies of the Muslim state till they cease their hostilities. The order to fight them is based on their behavior as enemy combatants and not to force them to accept Islam against their will.

This understanding of the Prophet's teaching in historical context and in the context of the Qur'an is crucial because a wrong understanding have serious consequences. A wrong understanding means that the Prophet (PBUH) told Muslims to fight non-Muslims and force them to submit to Islam. This wrong understanding means that Islam is at war with non-Muslims and has grave implications. This understanding is clearly wrong and must be rejected, for the Qur'an respects the rights of others to their faith and belief and calls Muslims to treat non-Muslims with kindness and justice and to work together and cooperate in virtue and what benefits mankind.

In this book we will discuss several aspects of the Prophet's life and give a proper understanding of how he reacted to events in historical context and in the context of the Qur'an.

The First Chapter discusses the life of Muhammad (PBUH) before the revelation and his noble character. It also discusses his marriage to Khadeeja. Then it explores the revelation of the Qur'an and why it came down over 23 years to answer questions, solve problems and guide the Prophet and the Muslims. This chapter also discusses the reasons for the Quraish resistance to Muhammad and how the Prophet and his companions patiently persevered, and the concept of social justice in Islam.

The Second Chapter discusses the concept of immigration and what is the reason for leaving our homes. The Hijra to Habasha, as well as the Hijra to Madina is explored and what do we learn today from this Hijra.

The Third Chapter discusses the problems that the Prophet (PBUH) faced in Madina and how he solved these problems, and how can we relate these issues to our lives today. This chapter discusses the concepts of brotherhood among the faithful and what does the mosque represent in the life of Muslims, and how can Muslims help each other.

The Fourth Chapter explores the relationship between Jews and Muslims in historical context and Qur'anic guidelines that govern such relationship. It also discusses the misconception that Muslims hate non-Muslims, and the misconceptions that current day Jews are enemies to Muslims.

The Fifth Chapter discusses the concept of learning and education and spreading useful knowledge or Da'Wa. How did the Prophet (PBUH) invite

to Islam and what are our obligations as current day Muslims in inviting others to Islam in America today?

The Sixth Chapter discusses the concept of Jihad and fighting and the Prophet's battles. What are the guidelines and morals and ethics for fighting? And what is the truth about the common misconception that Islam spread by the sword?

The Seventh Chapter discusses the Prophet's many wives and the rationale for these marriages. This is done in the context of the Qur'an and its guidelines regarding the family and the relationship between the spouses. It also discuss the misconceptions that women are treated badly in Muslim countries.

The Eighth Chapter discusses the Slander incident and how the Prophet (PBUH) reacted to the rumors spreading in Madina and how he respected the freedom of speech. It also discusses the duties of Muslims to stand up against wrong-doing and morals and ethics of holding our tongues and not harming others.

The Ninth Chapter discusses the role of Muslims when the Qur'an is attacked or the character of Prophet Muhammad slandered. How do we deal with misconceptions about the Qur'an and Sunnah and Shari'a?

Chapter One

The life of Muhammad before the revelation

Concepts discussed:

- 1-Muhammad was born in a noble family, but it is our character, faith and behavior that determines our worth and dignity not our noble birth
- 2-God chooses His messengers and prepares them for their mission. God's prophets apply Divine revelation in their life and become examples for others.
- 3-The Prophet's marriage to Khadeeja illustrates that being married to one woman is the norm in Islam.
- 4-The revelation to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the gradual revelation of the Qur'an.
- 5-Why did Quraish resist the mission of Muhammad? And what do we learn today when we invite others to Islam and we are rejected or our message misrepresented?
- 6-The concept of social justice in Islam

It is not our noble birth that determines our worth or human dignity but it is our character and behavior

Muhammad was born to the most noble family in Quraish: Bani Hashem. He traces his ancestry to Prophet Isma'il (Ishma'il) and Ibrahim (Abraham). He was an orphan when born, since his father died before his birth. His mother also died when he was 3 years old. He was raised by his grandfather then by his uncle.

Noble birth implies that we were raised in a good family and that we have morals and noble character and that we understand our responsibility. It does not mean however that we are privileged or have a special status, or better than others just because of our birth. It is our character and our behavior that determines our worth and human dignity and not our birth. It is what we do with our life and what impact we have on other people that determine our outcome. If we are born to righteous parents then it is expected of us to follow in their foot steps, rather than claim a special status because of our heritage. The Qur'an emphasizes this concept and gives an example how some behave in a wrong way:

□ فَخَلَفَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ وَرِثُوا الْكِتَابَ يَأْخُذُونَ عَرَضَ هَذَا الْأَدْنَىٰ وَيَقُولُونَ سَيُغْفَرُ
لَنَا وَإِن يَأْتِهِمْ عَرَضٌ مِّثْلَهُ يَأْخُذُوهُ أَلَمْ يُؤْخَذْ عَلَيْهِمْ مِيثَاقُ الْكِتَابِ أَن لَا يَقُولُوا عَلَىٰ
اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقَّ وَدَرَسُوا مَا فِيهِ وَالِدَارُ الْأُخْرَىٰ خَيْرٌ لِلَّذِينَ يُتَّقُونَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٦٩﴾

After them succeeded an (evil) generation: they inherited the Book, but they chose (for themselves) the vanities of this world, saying (for excuse): "(Everything) will be forgiven us." (Even so), if similar vanities came their way, they would (again) seize them. Was not the Covenant of the Book taken from them, that they would not ascribe to Allah anything but the truth? And they study what is in the Book. But best for the righteous is the Home in the Hereafter. Will ye not understand?

Al-Araf 7: 169

And

﴿ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ مِن ذُرِّيَّةِ آدَمَ وَمِمَّنْ حَمَلْنَا مَعَ نُوحٍ وَمِن
ذُرِّيَّةِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْرَائِيلَ وَمِمَّنْ هَدَيْنَا وَاجْتَبَيْنَا إِذَا تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُ الرَّحْمَنِ خَرُّوا
سُجَّدًا وَبُكِيًّا ﴿٥٨﴾

Those were some of the prophets on whom Allah did bestow His Grace, of the posterity of Adam, and of those whom We carried (in the Ark) with Noah, and of the posterity of Abraham and Israel, of those whom We guided and chose. Whenever the Signs of (Allah) Most Gracious were rehearsed to them, they would fall down in prostrate adoration and in tears,

Mariam (Mary) 19: 58

﴿ فَخَلَفَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ أَضَاعُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَاتَّبَعُوا الشَّهْوَاتِ فَسَوْفَ يَلْقَوْنَ غِيًّا ﴿٥٩﴾

﴿

But after them there followed a posterity who missed prayers and followed after lusts: soon, then will they face Destruction,
Marium (Mary) 19: 59

﴿إِلَّا مَنْ تَابَ وَءَامَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا﴾

Except those who repent and believe, and work righteousness: for these will enter the Garden and will not be wronged in the least,
Marium (Mary) 19: 60

Their fathers and forefathers were honorable righteous people. They were blessed and guided by God. Yet they did not live up to what is expected of them, rather they relied on their noble heritage and claimed immunity:

﴿وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ وَالنَّصْرَىٰ نَحْنُ أَبْنَاءُ اللَّهِ وَأَحِبُّهُرُ ۗ قُلْ فَلِمَ يُعَذِّبُكُمْ بِذُنُوبِكُمْ ۗ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ بَشَرٌ مِّمَّنْ خَلَقَ يَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَاءُ ۗ وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا ۗ وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ﴾

(Both) the Jews and the Christians say: "We are sons of Allah, and His beloved." Say: "Why then doth He punish you for your sins? Nay, ye are but men, of the men He hath created: He forgiveth whom He pleaseth, and He punisheth whom He pleaseth: and to Allah belongeth the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between: and unto Him is the final goal (of all)."

Al-Maeda (The Table) 5: 18

Being chosen by God means that we understand and shoulder our responsibility, and that we prove through our actions that indeed we are worthy of this noble heritage. The Qur'an praises the Muslims because of their faith and behavior:

﴿كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ
وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ﴾

Ye are the best of Peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah.

Al-Imran (The Family of Imran) 3: 110

No Muslim can claim immunity or special status just because he was born to Muslim parents. It is what he does in his life that will determine his outcome.

The noble character of Muhammad

He was known among his people as **Al-Ameen** (The one to be trusted). They kept their valuables with him for safe-keeping knowing that he is to be trusted and will never cheat anyone. To gain the trust of people cannot occur overnight, rather such a trust is built over many years of honesty and respect and noble character. Such was Muhammad. He was poor but had dignity. He never lied or cheated. He kept his promises. He did not engage in wrong-doing. A Prophet or a Messenger of God must be worthy of trust and must be admired by his people in order for them to trust him and believe what he says. The Qur'an praises the character of Muhammad and shows how much he cares for others and wants them to be guided:

﴿ لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُمْ

بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٢٨﴾

Now hath come unto you a Messenger from amongst yourselves: it grieves him that ye should perish: ardently anxious is he over you: to the Believers is he most kind and merciful.

At-Tawba (The Repentance) 9: 128

All of God's prophets and messengers were noble human beings worthy of trust. They cared deeply about their people and delivered God's message:

﴿ كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٥﴾ ﴾

The people of Noah rejected the Messengers.
Ash-Shura'a (The Poets) 26: 105

﴿ إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمُّ أَخُوهُمْ نُوحٌ أَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٦﴾ ﴾

Behold, their brother Noah said to them: "Will ye not fear (Allah)?
Ash-Shura'a (The Poets) 26: 106

﴿ إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ ﴿١٧﴾ ﴾

"I am to you a Messenger worthy of all trust:
Ash-Shura'a (The Poets) 26: 107

﴿ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا ﴿١٨﴾ ﴾

"So fear Allah, and obey me.
Ash-Shura'a (The Poets) 26: 108

﴿ وَمَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ ۖ إِنَّا نَجْرِي إِلَّا عَلَىٰ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٩﴾ ﴾

"No reward do I ask of you for it: my reward is only from the Lord of
the worlds:
Ash-Shura'a (The Poets) 26: 109

And

﴿ لَعَلَّكَ بَنَخَعٌ نَفْسَكَ ۖ أَلَّا يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾ ﴾

It may be thou frettest thy soul with grief, that they do not become
Believers.
Ash-Shura'a (The Poets) 26: 3

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was also known as **As-Sadiq** (The one who tells the truth), for he never lied in his life. People accepted what he said as the truth because all his life he was truthful. They trusted him for he never lied to them once. To be truthful is a noble Qur'anic character:

﴿ يٰٓأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصّٰدِقِينَ ﴿١١٩﴾ ﴾

O ye who believe! Fear Allah and be with those who are true (in word and deed).

At-Tawba (The Repentance) 9: 119

This character of telling the truth is that of God's Prophets. The Qur'an praises Musa (Moses) that he would never tell a lie about God:

﴿ وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ يُفْرِعُونَ إِنِّي رَسُولٌ مِّن رَّبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٤﴾ ﴾

Moses said: "O Pharaoh! I am a Messenger from the Lord of the Worlds.

Al-Araf 7: 104

﴿ حَقِيقٌ عَلَىٰ أَن لَّا أَقُولَ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقَّ قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِبَيِّنَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ فَأَرْسِلْ

مَعِيَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ ﴿١٥﴾ ﴾

"One for whom it is right to say nothing but truth about Allah. Now have I come unto you (people), from your Lord, with a Clear (Sign): so let the Children of Israel depart along with me."

Al-Araf 7: 105

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) encouraged Muslims to always say the truth and to be faithful to their trusts and promises. He explained that being truthful is a characteristic of those who are righteous and guides to paradise. On the other hand, lying is a characteristic of those who are evil and wicked and leads to Hell. He said: (Always tell the truth and keep your promises because it guides to righteousness, and righteousness guides to paradise; a person keeps telling the truth till he is known to Allah as truthful. And avoid lies and lying, for lying guides to wickedness, and wickedness guides to Hell Fire; a person may keep on lying till he is known to Allah as a liar) Ahmad, Muslim & Termedhi.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) also explained the character of a hypocrite as a person who lies and cannot be trusted for he does not keep his promises nor is faithful to his trusts. He said: (The signs of a hypocrite are three: When he talks he lies; and when he promises he does not keep his promises, and when he is entrusted he betrays that trust) Bokhari & Muslim.

Muhammad was kind and gentle. He was not harsh or severe in temperament. He sought the council of others. He overlooked their mistakes and shortcomings, and he sought God's forgiveness on their behalf. The Qur'an describes this as a blessing from God:

﴿ فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ ﴾

It is part of the Mercy of Allah that thou dost deal gently with them. Wert thou severe or harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about thee: so pass over (their faults), and ask for (Allah's) forgiveness for them; and consult them in affairs (of moment). Then, when thou hast taken a decision, put thy trust in Allah. For Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him).

Al-Imran (The Family of Imran) 3: 159

He was patient and tolerant and harbored no ill-feelings in his heart towards others. He did not get angry or seek revenge for himself. Rather he was willing to forgive. He complied with the Qur'anic order:

﴿ خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ ﴾

Hold to forgiveness; command what is right; but turn away from the ignorant.

Al-Araf 7: 199

His ability and willingness to forgive was apparent when Macca was opened. He did not seek revenge from those who abused him and rejected him, rather he forgave those who subjected the Muslims to years of persecution and oppression. He said:

(Go you are free. No blame attaches to you today, may Allah forgive you). Bokhari

The Prophet (PBUH) was subjected to extreme pressure when his honor was attacked as rumors spread in Madina accusing Aesha of adultery. He did not exact revenge for himself. He asked: Why are people accusing my family? He waited patiently till a Qur'an came down exonerating Aesha and proving her innocence. He was head of state and could have forced these rumors to stop and punish those responsible. But to safeguard freedom of speech was more important at this situation.

Prophet Muhammad was patient and perseverant all his life. He sought comfort in God's pleasure and worked through his difficulties and never gave up hope of God's mercy and guidance. He had a strong will and determination and worked hard to achieve his objectives and accomplish his mission

He lost both his parents before age 4. All his sons died in infancy. Three daughters died before him. He said: (Any person who experiences adversity and the loss of loved ones, then says: "We belong to Allah, and to Him we shall return. On those the blessings and mercy of Allah will descend, and they will be guided. O Allah help me in my loss, and provide for me better than what I lost" Allah will respond to him, and will help him and will provide for him better than what he lost)

The Prophet faced rejection and abuse in Macca and few believed in him. He was called a liar and accused of being a magician, a poet or a possessed man. He patiently persevered, remained steadfast and never stopped calling to Allah. The Qur'an ordered him to be steadfast as were other messengers of firm resolve:

﴿ قَدْ نَعْلَمُ إِنَّهُ لَيَحْزُنُكَ الَّذِي يَقُولُونَ فَإِنَّهُمْ لَا يُكَذِّبُونَكَ وَلَكِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ بِآيَاتِ

اللَّهِ تَجْحَدُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

We know indeed the grief which their words do cause thee: it is not thee they reject: it is the Signs of Allah, which the wicked contemn.

Al-Ana'm (The Cattle) 6: 33

﴿ وَلَقَدْ كُذِّبَتْ رُسُلٌ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَصَبَرُوا عَلَىٰ مَا كُذِّبُوا وَأُوذُوا حَتَّىٰ أَنتَهُم نَصْرُنَا وَلَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكَ مِن نَّبَايِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴾ ﴿٦٤﴾

Rejected were the Messengers before thee: with patience and constancy they bore their rejection and their wrongs, until Our aid did reach them: there is none that can alter the Words (and Decrees) of Allah. Already hast thou received some account of those Messengers.

Al-Ana'm (The Cattle) 6: 34

And

﴿ فَأَصْبِرْ كَمَا صَبَرَ أُولُو الْعَزْمِ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ وَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلْ لَهُمْ ۚ كَأَنَّهُمْ يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَ مَا يُوعَدُونَ لَمْ يَلْبَثُوا إِلَّا سَاعَةً مِّن نَّهَارٍ ۚ بَلَّغْ ۚ فَهَلْ يُهْلِكُ إِلَّا الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴾ ﴿٤٦﴾

Therefore patiently persevere, as did (all) Messengers of inflexible purpose; and be in no haste about the (Unbelievers). On the Day that they see the (Punishment) promised them, (it will be) as if they had not tarried more than an hour in a single day. (Thine but) to proclaim the Message: but shall any be destroyed except those who transgress?

Al-Ahqaf 46: 35

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was rejected in Tai'f and mcked. He was attacked by mobs. What concerned him the most was the fear that Allah may be angry with him or not pleased with him. He said in his Du'a (prayer) to Allah:

(I seek protection in the light of your face, which illuminates the heavens and dispels the darkness, and which controls all affairs in this life and in the Hereafter. May it never be that I incur Your wrath, or that You should inflict Your anger on me. I will appeal to you until I am acceptable to You. There is no power and no resource except Yours alone).

Prophet Muhammad was humble and not arrogant.

He never elevated himself over his companions, but was one of them: he ate with them and visited them and sought their advice. One day they stood up to greet him, and he said: (Do not honor me like the Christians honored and

elevated Eisa (Jesus) the son of Mary; rather say: “Allah’s servant and messenger). The Prophet (PBUH) was complying with the Qur’anic order:

﴿ وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا ۖ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَخْرِقَ الْأَرْضَ وَلَنْ تَبْلُغَ الْجِبَالَ طُولًا ﴾ ﴿٣٧﴾

Nor walk on the earth with insolence: for thou canst not rend the earth asunder, nor reach the mountains in height.

Al-Isra’a (The Night Journey) 17: 37

And

﴿ وَلَا تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا ۖ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ ۖ فَخُورٍ ﴾ ﴿١٨﴾

"And swell not thy cheek (For pride) at men, nor walk in insolence through the earth: for Allah loveth not any arrogant boaster.

Luqman 31: 18

﴿ وَأَقْصِدْ فِي مَشْيِكَ ۖ وَأَغْضُضْ مِنْ صَوْتِكَ ۚ إِنَّ أَنْكَرَ الْأَصْوَاتِ لَصَوْتُ الْحَمِيرِ ﴾ ﴿١٩﴾

"And be moderate in thy pace, and lower thy voice; for the harshest of sounds without doubt is the braying of the ass."

Luqman 31: 19

Prophet Muhammad was just even with his enemies, and never wronged any person.

He was conscious of his responsibility and accountability to Allah. He did not favor rich over poor or a noble powerful person over a poor weak person. He said:

(You come to me to judge between you; some of you may be more eloquent and more effective in presenting his case than others. If I judge in favor of someone who wronged his brother then what he gets is only a piece of Hell Fire).

The Qur’an confirms the concept of justice and encourages Muslims to be just and not favor those related to them, or those whom they like:

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلّٰهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدِينَ
 وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ ۚ إِن يَكُنْ غَنِيًّا أَوْ فَقِيرًا فَاللّٰهُ أَوْلَىٰ بِهِمَا ۗ فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا أَهْوَىٰ ۖ إِن تَعَدِلُوا وَإِن
 تَلُودُوا أَوْ تَعْرِضُوا فَإِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ﴾

O ye who believe! stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor: for Allah can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest ye swerve, and if ye distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do.

An-Nesa'a (The Women) 4: 135

The Qur'anic verse warns us against following our vain desires lest we fail to be just or decline to stand up for justice against those who are rich and powerful, or those we like. A similar verse in the Qur'an warns a us not to let our dislike or hatred for other people color our judgment or forces us to be unjust:

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلّٰهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ ۗ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ
 قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ ءَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا ۗ أَعْدِلُوا هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا
 تَعْمَلُونَ ﴾

O ye who believe! stand out firmly for Allah, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is next to Piety: and fear Allah. For Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do.

Al-Maeda (The Table) 5: 8

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) warned against injustice or wronging others. He said:

(Protect yourselves from the prayer of those who are wronged, for such a prayer is carried over the clouds and the gates of heaven are opened for it

and Allah, glory be to Him says: “With My might I will come to your rescue, if not now then after a while) Tabarani.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was content to live a simple life like a poor Muslim. He did not want to be rich or live like a king (Zuhd)

He was given a choice and he chose to be a servant of Allah and a Prophet. He prayed to Allah:

(O Allah make the sustenance of Muhammad’s family what is necessary and that which they will accept, and with which they will be content). They never enjoyed a full meal and survived on dates, occasionally milk and even more rarely meat. Aesha related that it was rare for a fire to be lit in the house of Muhammad for cooking (Bokhari).

The Prophet was ordered in the Qur’an not to look with longing at what others are enjoying of the pleasures of this life, but to be happy and content with what Allah provides, and to feel close to Allah through regular prayers:

﴿ وَلَا تَمُدَّنَّ عَيْنَيْكَ إِلَىٰ مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجًا مِّنْهُمْ زَهْرَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا لِنَفْتِنَهُمْ فِيهِ ۗ

﴿ وَرَزَقْنَاكَ مِنْ حَيْثُ وَابْتَغَىٰ ۗ﴾

Nor strain thine eyes in longing for the things We have given for enjoyment to parties of them, the splendour of the life of this world, through which We test them: but the provision of thy Lord is better and more enduring.

Ta Ha 20: 131

﴿ وَأْمُرْ أَهْلَكَ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَاصْطَبِرْ عَلَيْهَا ۖ لَا نَسْأَلُكَ رِزْقًا ۗ نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُكَ ۗ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ ۗ﴾

﴿ ۙ﴾

Enjoin prayer on thy people, and be constant therein. We ask thee not to provide sustenance: We provide it for thee. But the (fruit of) the Hereafter is for righteousness.

Ta Ha 20: 132

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) did not save anything for himself or his family. He gave his possessions to the poor and needy and said:

(We Prophets do not leave anything to be inherited). What the Prophet left was his example and his teachings, a gift to mankind that is useful at all times.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was a devout worshipper (Ebada)

Before the revelation Muhammad used to go into seclusion to meditate. He spent many nights alone in the cave of Hara'a, worshipping Allah, and he spent the month of Ramadan in meditation and worship.

After he became a Prophet the order came from Allah that His Prophet should spend part of the night in prayer:

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَزْمِلُ ﴾

O thou folded in garments!

Al-Muzzamil (Folded in garments) 73: 1

﴿ قُمْ أَلَيْلَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴾

Stand (to prayer) by night, but not all night,

Al-Muzzamil (Folded in garments) 73: 2

﴿ نِصْفَهُ أَوْ أَنْقِصْ مِنْهُ قَلِيلًا ﴾

Half of it, or a little less,

Al-Muzzamil (Folded in garments) 73: 3

﴿ أَوْزِدْ عَلَيْهِ وَرَتِّلِ الْقُرْآنَ تَرْتِيلًا ﴾

Or a little more; and recite the Qur-an in slow, measured rhythmic tones.

Al-Muzzamil (Folded in garments) 73: 4

When Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) prayed alone at night he would stand for several hours. His wife Aesha asked him: (O messenger of Allah! Why do you pray so much when Allah has already forgiven your sins, what happened in the past, and what may follow?). He said: (Should I not then be a grateful servant of Allah?) (Bokhari &

Muslim.) The Qur'an describes the devotion of Allah's messenger during his prayers and supplication to Allah:

﴿ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى الْعَزِيزِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴿٢١٧﴾ ﴾

And put thy trust on the Exalted in Might, the Merciful,
Ash-Shura'a (The Poets) 26: 217

﴿ الَّذِي يَرِنُكَ حِينَ تَقُومُ ﴿٢١٨﴾ ﴾

Who seeth thee standing forth (in prayer),
Ash-Shura'a (The Poets) 26: 218

﴿ وَتَقَلُّبُكَ فِي السَّجِدِينَ ﴿٢١٩﴾ ﴾

And thy movements among those who prostrate themselves.
Ash-Shura'a (The Poets) 26: 219

In contrast, when the Prophet led others in prayer, he would shorten his prayer. He said: (When you lead a congregational prayer shorten it, because behind you are those who are sick or old and cannot stand too long, and those preoccupied and want to finish their prayers quickly

In addition to regular prayers the Prophet established additional optional prayers called As-Sunnah (tradition) to be offered along with the obligatory five daily prayers. These are two Rak'a before Dawn, 2-4 Rak'a before and after Noon prayer, two Rak'a after Sunset prayer and 2 RAK'a after the Night prayer.

The Prophet (PBUH) also taught us to remember Allah and to seek His forgiveness at all times. He said:
(By Allah I seek His forgiveness and I turn to Him in repentance every day seventy times). A special time to seek Allah's forgiveness and to pray to Him is the late hours at night or early morning as the Qur'an describes those who are righteous and devoted:

﴿ تَتَجَافَى جُنُوبُهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ ﴾



Their limbs do forsake their beds of sleep, the while they call on their Lord, in Fear and Hope: and they spend (in charity) out of the sustenance which We have bestowed on them.

As-Sajda (The Prostration) 32: 16

And

﴿ إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ ﴾

As to the Righteous, they will be in the midst of Gardens and Springs,

Adh-Dhareyat 51: 15

﴿ ءَأَخَذِينَ مَا ءَاتَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ ءِإِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ مُحْسِنِينَ ﴾

Taking joy in the things which their Lord gives them, because, before then, they lived a good life.

Adh-Dhareyat 51: 16

﴿ كَانُوا قَلِيلًا مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ مَا يَهْجَعُونَ ﴾

They were in the habit of sleeping but little by night,

Adh-Dhareyat 51: 17

﴿ وَبِالْأَسْحَارِ هُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ ﴾

And in the hours of early dawn, they (were found) praying for Forgiveness;

Adh-Dhareyat 51: 18

All these attributes illustrate the noble character of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his high morals and excellent ethical behavior. Allah in the Qur'an praises the character of His messenger:

﴿ وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴾

And thou (standest) on an exalted standard of character.
Al-Qalam (the Pen) 68: 4

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) summarized his mission when he said: (I have been sent to implement the most noble of character and morals) Hakim & Baihaqi. When his wife Aesha was asked about his character, she said: His character and morals were those of the Qur'an (Bokhari).

God chooses His messengers and prepares them for their mission. God's prophets apply God's message in their life to become examples for others

To be a messenger of God is a great honor and a heavy responsibility. A messenger is chosen from among his people and they know him to be an honest person who is truthful and trustworthy. God knows where to put His trust and how to choose His messengers:

﴿ اللَّهُ يَصْطَفِي مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ رُسُلًا وَمِنَ النَّاسِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ ﴾

Allah chooses Messengers from angels and from men for Allah is He Who hears and sees (all things).
Al-Hajj (The Pilgrimage) 22: 75

And

﴿ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ حَيْثُ يَجْعَلُ رِسَالَتَهُ ﴾

Allah knoweth best where (and how) to carry out His mission.
Al-Ana'am (The Cattle) 6: 124

God prepares His messengers and guides them. He makes sure that they deliver the message accurately without addition or deletion:

﴿ يَتَأْتِيهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ ^ط وَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ ^ج
 وَاللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ ^ظ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾

O Apostle! proclaim the (Message) which hath been sent to thee from thy Lord. If thou didst not, thou wouldst not have fulfilled and proclaimed His Mission. And Allah will defend thee from men (who mean mischief). For Allah guideth not those who reject Faith.

Al-Maeda (The Table) 5: 67

And

﴿ عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلَىٰ غَيْبِهِ أَحَدًا ﴿٧٨﴾

"He (alone) knows the Unseen, nor does He make anyone acquainted with His Mysteries,

Al-Jinn 72: 26

﴿ إِلَّا مَنْ أَرْتَضَىٰ مِنْ رَسُولٍ فَإِنَّهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَسْلُكُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ رَصَدًا ﴿٧٩﴾

"Except a Messenger whom He has chosen: and then he makes a band of watchers march before him and behind him,

Al-Jinn 72: 27

﴿ لِيَعْلَمَ أَنْ قَدْ أَبْلَغُوا رَسُولًا رِسَالَتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَحَاطَ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ وَأَحْصَىٰ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عَدَدًا ﴿٨٠﴾

"That he may know that they have (truly) brought and delivered the Messages of their Lord: and He surrounds (all the mysteries) that are with them, and takes account of every single thing."

Al-Jinn 72: 28

A messenger lives with his own people and applies the message in his character and behavior. He knows their customs and traditions and he talks to them in a way they understand and relates to:

﴿ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا بِلِسَانِ قَوْمِهِ لِيُبَيِّنَ لَهُمْ ^ط فَيُضِلُّ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي

مَنْ يَشَاءُ ^ج وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٨١﴾

We sent not a Messenger except (to teach) in the language of his (own) people, in order to make (things) clear to them. Now Allah leaves straying those whom He pleases and guides whom He pleases: and He is Exalted in Power, Full of Wisdom.

Ibrahim (Abraham) 14: 4

The Qur'an in many of its verses explores morals and noble character like honesty, integrity, truthfulness, kindness, caring, humility and mercy. A messenger of God must possess these qualities in order to become an example for others. The Qur'an praises the noble character of Prophet Muhammad:

﴿ وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٤﴾ ﴾

And thou (standest) on an exalted standard of character.

Al-Qalam (The Pen) 68: 4

The Qur'an asks Muslims to follow the example of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in his noble character and proper behavior:

﴿ لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ ﴾

﴿ كَثِيرًا ﴿٣١﴾ ﴾

Ye have indeed in the Messenger of Allah a beautiful pattern (of conduct) for any one whose hope is in Allah and the Final Day, and who engages much in the praise of Allah.

Al-Ahzab (The Confederates) 33: 21

As human beings we need both a Divine book of revelation to guide us as well as a human messenger to pattern our behavior after his example. The Qur'an emphasizes these two sources of guidance:

﴿ وَكَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ وَأَنْتُمْ تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ وَفِيكُمْ رَسُولُهُ ۗ وَمَنْ يَعْتَصِم بِاللَّهِ ﴾

﴿ فَقَدْ هَدَىٰ إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿١١﴾ ﴾

And how would ye deny Faith while unto you are rehearsed the Signs of Allah, and among you lives the Messenger? Whoever holds firmly to Allah will be shown a Way that is straight.

Al-Imran (The Family of Imran) 3: 101

Therefore, a messenger of God:

- 1-Is chosen from among his people and is well known to them as a person to be trusted
- 2-He is groomed and prepared and guided by God
- 3-He delivers the message to the best of his ability
- 4-He explains and applies the message in his life
- 5-He becomes an example for his people

Muhammad was a Sheppard then became a merchant

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said that all God's messengers were Sheppard. One may ask why? A Sheppard takes care of his animals and has time to think and reflect. He learns responsibility and his duty to guide. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said that every person is a Sheppard and a guardian for those under his authority. He is responsible for their welfare and should guide them and set an example for them.

Before the revelation for more than 15 years Muhammad worked as a merchant. He learned how to interact and deal with people. A successful merchant understands the needs and personality of different people. He learns how to talk and approach them. He learns that honesty and being trust-worthy is an essential quality. This experience that Muhammad learned was helpful when he became a messenger of God and had to invite others to Islam and talk to them. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said that an honest merchant who is trust-worthy is in heaven.

The Prophet's marriage to Khadeeja

Muhammad was 25 years old and Khadeeja was 40 years old when they got married. She bore for him 4 daughters and two sons. His

sons died in infancy. Three of his daughters predeceased him, only Fatima lived after him for few months.

Khadeeja was his only wife for 25 years, which proves that marriage to one woman is the norm in Islam. The Prophet married several women after Khadeeja died. Some of these marriages were for political reasons.

The fact that Khadeeja was his employer means that in Islam men can serve under women. What is important is whether a person is qualified and able to do the job at hand, and not his gender. The Qur'an stresses that what is important is the ability to perform and being trust-worthy:

﴿ قَالَتْ إِحَدْنُهُمَا يَتَأْتِ اسْتَعَجِرُهُ ۖ إِنَّ خَيْرَ مَنْ اسْتَعَجَرْتَ الْقَوِيُّ الْأَمِينُ ﴿٢٦﴾ ﴾

Said one of the (damsels): "O my (dear) father! engage him on wages: truly the best of men for thee to employ is the (man) who is strong and trusty."

Al-Qasas (The Stories) 28: 26

And

﴿ قَالَ أَجْعَلْنِي عَلَىٰ خَزَائِنِ الْأَرْضِ ۗ إِنِّي حَفِيظٌ عَلَيْمُ ﴿٥٥﴾ ﴾

(Joseph) said: "Set me over the store-houses of the land: I will indeed guard them, as one that knows (their importance)."

Yousseff (Joseph) 12: 55

Khadeeja took good care of her husband and provided for him a peaceful home. She was given the glad tidings in her life of a house in paradise made of pearls with no noise or difficulty as a reward for what she provided for God's messenger. Muhammad always remembered Khadeeja with longing after she died. When asked by his wife Aesha why do you praise her so much? He replied because she took care of me and believed in me when no one else did.

The revelation to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

The Qur'an was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The Qur'an is a Divine revelation from God in order to guide mankind to the way of God:

﴿الرَّ كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ لِتُخْرِجَ النَّاسَ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ ﴿١﴾﴾

Alif Lam Ra. A Book which We have revealed unto thee, in order that thou mightest lead mankind out of the depths of darkness into light - by the leave of their Lord - to the Way of (Him) the Exalted in Power, Worthy of all Praise!

Ibrahim (Abraham) 14: 1

And

﴿كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ ۖ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٢٩﴾﴾

(Here is) a Book which We have sent down unto thee, full of blessings, that they may meditate on its Signs, and that men of understanding may receive admonition.

Sa D 38: 29

Prophet Muhammad used to meditate in the cave of Hara'a, especially during the month of Ramadan, searching for the truth and trying to get closer to God. His soul was being purified as he left his preoccupation with worldly life and fasted and meditated. Then one day the Angel of revelation Jibreel (Gabriel) appeared to him and ordered him to read. The Prophet was illiterate and could not read or write. He said: "I cannot read". The Angel shook him and ordered him to read three times. Frightened the Prophet asked: "What should I read?" The Angel said:

﴿اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ ﴿١﴾﴾

Proclaim! (or Read!) In the name of thy Lord and Cherisher, Who created,

Al-Alaq (The Clot) 96: 1

﴿ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ﴿١﴾ ﴾

Created man, out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood:

Al-Alaq (The Clot) 96: 2

﴿ أَقْرَأُ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ ﴿٢﴾ ﴾

Proclaim! and thy Lord is Most Bountiful,

Al-Alaq (The Clot) 96: 3

﴿ الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ﴿٣﴾ ﴾

He Who taught (the use of) the Pen,

Al-Alaq (The Clot) 96: 4

﴿ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ﴿٤﴾ ﴾

Taught man that which he knew not.

Al-Alaq (The Clot) 96: 5

These were the first verses of the Qur'an revealed to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). It emphasizes God's blessing over mankind in that He sent down his own words to teach us and to guide us to His way. These verses emphasize the importance of learning and understanding. As human beings we learn all our lives and we evolve. The Qur'an in other verses emphasizes the importance of learning:

﴿ وَقُلْ رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا ﴿١١٤﴾ ﴾

but say, "O my Lord! advance me in knowledge."

Ta Ha 20: 114

The Qur'an praises those of knowledge and proper understanding compared to those who do not know or are ill-informed:

﴿ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٠١﴾ إِنَّمَّا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿١٠٢﴾ ﴾

Say: "Are those equal, those who know and those who do not know? It is those who are endowed with understanding that receive admonition.

Az-Zumar (The Groups) 39: 9

Those who know and understand are able to see their way clearly and understand their mission in life and their responsibility and accountability. In contrast, those who are ignorant and ill-informed are in darkness unable to get out and are preoccupied with their desires:

﴿أُوْمَن كَانَ مَيِّتًا فَأَحْيَيْنَاهُ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُ نُورًا يَمْشِي بِهِ فِي النَّاسِ كَمَن مَّثَلُهُ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ لَيْسَ بِخَارِجٍ مِّنْهَا ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ زُيِّنَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢٢﴾﴾

Can he who was dead, to whom We gave life, and a Light whereby he can walk amongst men, be like him who is in the depths of darkness, from which he can never come out? Thus to those without Faith their own deeds seem pleasing.

Al-Ana'am (The Cattle) 6: 122

The Angel Jibreel appeared to the Prophet in his true form with wings, and he was frightened. He went to his home and asked his wife to cover him up. When he told her of what he saw she reassured him that God has chosen him as His Prophet and messenger.

The Qur'an came down from heaven gradually over 23 years, 13 years in Macca and 10 years in Madina till shortly before the Prophet's death at age 63.

Those who reject faith kept asking: "Why did not the Qur'an come down all at once? Why did it come interrupted and its verses revealed gradually over so many years? The Qur'an answers these questions:
1-To strengthen the heart of the Prophet (PBUH) and his companions
2-To answer questions and to solve problems
3-It is humanly impossible to learn and memorize the Qur'an if it came down all at once. It is a mercy from God that the Qur'an came down slowly and interrupted over 23 years. This allowed the Prophet and his companions to recite few verses at a time, memorize them,

understand them and apply them in their life. Then they can move on to other verses.

﴿ وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ الْقُرْآنُ جُمْلَةً وَاحِدَةً كَذَلِكَ لِنُثَبِّتَ بِهِ فُؤَادَكَ
وَرَتَّلْنَاهُ تَرْتِيلًا ﴾

Those who reject Faith say: "Why is not the Qur-an revealed to him all at once? Thus (is it revealed), that We may strengthen thy heart thereby, and We have rehearsed it to thee in slow, well-arranged stages, gradually.

Al-Furqan (The Criterion) 25: 32

﴿ وَلَا يَأْتُونَكَ بِمَثَلٍ إِلَّا جِئْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَأَحْسَنَ تَفْسِيرًا ﴾

And no question do they bring to thee but We reveal to thee the truth and the best explanation (thereof).

Al-Furqan (The Criterion) 25: 33

Initially Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was afraid that he may not remember these Qur'anic verses. He used to hurry in his recitation of the Qur'an till Allah assured him that he will remember the Qur'anic verses and not forget. After these verses were revealed he took his time and recited the Qur'an slowly and properly:

﴿ لَا تُحْرِكْ بِهِ لِسَانَكَ لِتَعْجَلَ بِهِ ﴾

Move not thy tongue concerning the (Qur-an) to make haste therewith.

Al-Qiama (The Day of Judgment) 75:16

﴿ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا جَمْعَهُ وَقُرْآنَهُ ﴾

It is for Us to collect it and to promulgate it:

Al-Qiama (The Day of Judgment) 75: 17

﴿ فَإِذَا قَرَأْنَاهُ فَاتَّبِعْ قُرْآنَهُ ﴾

But when We have promulgated it, follow thou its recital (as promulgated):

Al-Qiama (The Day of Judgment) 75: 18

﴿ ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا بَيَانَهُ ﴿١٨﴾ ﴾

Nay more, it is for Us to explain it (and make it clear):

Al-Qiama (The Day of Judgment) 75: 19

The Qur'an explains the function of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in delivering the message and in explaining its verses:

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ ^ط وَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ ^ج
 وَاللَّهُ يَعْصُمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ ^ظ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾ ﴾

O Apostle! proclaim the (Message) which hath been sent to thee from thy Lord. If thou didst not, thou wouldst not have fulfilled and proclaimed His Mission. And Allah will defend thee from men (who mean mischief). For Allah guideth not those who reject Faith.

An-Nesa'a (The Women) 4: 67

And

﴿ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالزُّبُرِ ^ظ وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ
 يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾ ﴾

(We sent them) with Clear Signs and Scriptures and We have sent down unto thee (also) the Message; that thou mayest explain clearly to men what is sent for them, and that they may give thought.

An-Nahl (The Bees) 16: 44

The Prophet also applied the message of the Qur'an in his character and behavior and became an example for others. The Qur'an urges Muslims to follow the example of the Prophet (PBUH):

﴿ لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ

كَثِيرًا ﴿ ﴿٣١﴾

Ye have indeed in the Messenger of Allah a beautiful pattern (of conduct) for any one whose hope is in Allah and the Final Day, and who engages much in the praise of Allah.

Al-Ahzab (The Cofederates) 33: 21

How did Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) receive this Divine revelation: the Qur'an? We are told by the Prophet that sometimes he saw the Angel of revelation in the form of a man who came to teach him the Qur'an. Sometimes he heard the Qur'an being inspired to him. The Qur'an states:

﴿ وَمَا كَانَ لِنَبِّئِهِ أَنْ يُكَلِّمَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا وَحْيًا أَوْ مِنْ وَرَائِ حِجَابٍ أَوْ يُرْسِلَ رَسُولًا فَيُوحِيَ

بِإِذْنِهِ مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّهُ عَلَىٰ حَكِيمٍ ﴿ ﴿٥١﴾

It is not fitting for a man that Allah should speak to him except by inspiration, or from behind a veil, or by the sending of a Messenger to reveal, with Allah's permission, what Allah wills: for He is Most High, Most Wise.

Ash-Shura (The Consultation) 42: 51

﴿ وَكَذَٰلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ رُوحًا مِّنْ أَمْرِنَا ۚ مَا كُنْتَ تَدْرِي مَا أَلَكْتُبُ وَلَا الْإِيمَنُ

وَلٰكِن جَعَلْنَاهُ نُورًا نَّهْدِي بِهِ مَن نَّشَاءُ مِّنْ عِبَادِنَا ۚ وَإِنَّكَ لَتَهْدِي إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ

﴿ ﴿٥٢﴾

And thus have We, by Our command, sent inspiration to thee: thou knewest not (before) what was Revelation, and what was Faith: but We have made the (Qur-an) a Light, wherewith We guide such of Our servants as We will; and verily thou dost guide (men) to the Straight Way;

Ash-Shura (The Consultation) 42: 52

When only few verses were revealed it was probably not difficult, but when an entire chapter was revealed it must have been quite difficult for the Prophet to receive and memorize this divine revelation. All we know is that God made this possible and made it easier.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) then related the Qur'anic verses inspired to him to his companions. These trusted companions memorized and wrote down these verses of the Qur'an. Therefore, the Qur'an was safeguarded in two forms: oral and written form. There was one group whose job was to memorize the Qur'an and there were few of them who memorized the whole Qur'an during the life of Muhammad. It is not difficult to memorize few verses revealed from time to time if these verses are being recited in prayer five times every day. Another group of the Prophet's companions were scribes who were charged with the responsibility of writing down the Qur'anic verses. They wrote them on material available at that time. Before the Prophet's death the whole Qur'an was safeguarded in oral and written forms. Its verses were memorized in the hearts of many, and its verses were written by many.

Previous divine revelations were entrusted to the scholars as the Qur'an reminds us:

﴿ إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا التَّوْرَةَ فِيهَا هُدًى وَنُورٌ تَحْكُمُ بِهَا النَّبِيُّونَ الَّذِينَ أَسْلَمُوا لِلَّذِينَ هَادُوا
وَالرَّبَّانِيُّونَ وَالْأَحْبَارُ بِمَا اسْتُحْفِظُوا مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ وَكَانُوا عَلَيْهِ شُهَدَاءَ فَلَا تَخْشَوُا
النَّاسَ وَأَخْشَوْنَ وَلَا تَشْتَرُوا بِآيَاتِي ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا وَمَنْ لَمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ
هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ ﴾

It was We who revealed the Law (to Moses): therein was guidance and light. By its standard have been judged the Jews, by the Prophets who bowed (as in Islam) to Allah's Will, by the Rabbis and the Doctors of Law: for to them was entrusted the protection of Allah's Book, and they were witnesses thereto: therefore fear not men, but fear Me, and sell not My Signs for a miserable price. If any do fail to

judge by (the light of) what Allah hath revealed, they are (no better than) Unbelievers.

Al-Maeda (The Table) 5: 44

However the Rabbis and the scholars did not safeguard what Allah sent down. The Qur'an tells us that some verses were altered:

﴿ فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ يَكْتُبُونَ الْكِتَابَ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ ثُمَّ يَقُولُونَ هَذَا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ لِيَشْتَرُوا بِهِءَ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا ۗ فَوَيْلٌ لَهُمْ مِمَّا كَتَبَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَوَيْلٌ لَهُمْ مِمَّا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴾

Then woe to those who write the Book with their own hands, and then say: "This is from Allah," to traffic with it for a miserable price! Woe to them for what their hands do write, and for the gain they make thereby.

Al-Baqara (The Cow) 2: 79

God has promised to safeguard the Qur'an from alteration. This Qur'an that we have today is the same Arabic Qur'an revealed to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH):

﴿ إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ ﴾

We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption).

Al-Hijr (The Rocky Tracts) 15: 9

Because the Qur'an was safeguarded from alteration it confirms and controls previous divine revelations and corrects any mistakes human beings introduced into divine revelation:

﴿ وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمُهَيْمِنًا عَلَيْهِ ۗ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَهُم بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ ۗ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ عَمَّا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ ۗ ﴾

To thee We sent the Scripture in truth, confirming the Scripture that came before it, and guarding it in safety: so judge between them by what Allah hath revealed, and follow not their vain desires, diverging from the Truth that hath come to thee.

Al-Maeda (The Table) 5: 48

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) used to recite from the Qur'an when he invited people to Islam. The Qur'an has a way of addressing our hearts and minds and the truth in the Qur'an is apparent to anyone with an open mind. One of the verses that the Prophet (PBUH) used frequently in his Da'Wa (invitation to Allah) is this verse:

﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ
وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ ۗ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴾

Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, that ye may receive admonition.

An-Nahl (The Bees) 16: 90

Why did Quraish resist Muhammad?

Though they knew him to be an honest truthful person the Quraish did not accept his Da'Wa or believe in him as a messenger of God. They were fierce in their opposition and accused him of being a liar, a sorcerer, a magician or being a mad possessed person. They did everything in their power to silence him and prevent people from listening to his Da'Wa. The Qur'an explains their attempts:

﴿ فَذَكِّرْ فَمَا أَنْتَ بِنِعْمَتِ رَبِّكَ بِكَاهِنٍ وَلَا مَجْنُونٍ ﴾

Therefore proclaim thou the praises (of thy Lord): for by the Grace of thy Lord, thou art no (vulgar) soothsayer, nor art thou one possessed.

At-Tur (The Mountain of Tur) 52: 29

﴿ أَمْ يَقُولُونَ شَاعِرٌ نَّتَرْتِصُ بِهِ رَيْبَ الْمَنُونِ ﴾

Or do they say: "A Poet! we await for him some calamity (hatched) by Time!"

At-Tur (The Mountain of Tur) 52: 30

﴿ قُلْ تَرَبَّصُوا فَإِنِّي مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الْمُتَرَبِّصِينَ ﴾

Say thou: "Await ye! I too will wait along with you!"

At-Tur (The mountain of Tur) 52: 31

And

﴿ وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَا تَسْمَعُوا هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ وَالْغَوْا فِيهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَغْلِبُونَ ﴾

The Unbelievers say; "Listen not to this Qur-an, but talk at random in the midst of its (reading), that ye may gain the upper hand!"

Fusselat (Explained in detail) 41: 26

The Qur'an consoles the Prophet and explains that they are not rejecting him, rather they are rejecting the message of God:

﴿ قَدْ نَعْلَمُ إِنَّهُ لَيَحْزُنُكَ الَّذِي يَقُولُونَ فَإِنَّهُمْ لَا يُكَذِّبُونَكَ وَلَكِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ بِعَايَاتِ

﴿ اللَّهُ تَجْحَدُونَ ﴾

We know indeed the grief which their words do cause thee: it is not thee they reject: it is the Signs of Allah, which the wicked contemn.

Al-Ana'am (The Cattle) 6: 33

﴿ وَلَقَدْ كُذِّبَتْ رُسُلٌ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَصَبَرُوا عَلَىٰ مَا كُذِّبُوا وَأُوذُوا حَتَّىٰ أَنَّهُمْ نَصَرْنَا وَلَا

﴿ مُبَدَّلَ لِكَلِمَةٍ أَلَّهِ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكَ مِن نَّبِيِّ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴾

Rejected were the Messengers before thee: with patience and constancy they bore their rejection and their wrongs, until Our aid did

reach them: there is none that can alter the Words (and Decrees) of Allah. Already hast thou received some account of those Messengers.

Al-Ana'am (The Cattle) 6: 34

The Qur'an explains why the tribe of Quraish and its leaders were opposed to Muhammad and to God's message. They did not want social justice or anything that threatened their power and influence:

﴿ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِّنْ نَّذِيرٍ إِلَّا قَالَ مُتْرَفُوهَا إِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهِءِ كَافِرُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾ ﴾

Never did We send a Warner to a population, but the wealthy ones among them said: "We believe not in the (Message) with which ye have been sent."

Sa Ba 34: 34

﴿ وَقَالُوا نَحْنُ أَكْثَرُ أَمْوَالًا وَأَوْلَادًا وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُعَذَّبِينَ ﴿٣٥﴾ ﴾

They said: "We have more in wealth and in sons, and we cannot be punished."

Sa Ba 34: 35

The economic life of Quraish depended on trade and on being the guardians of the sacred shrine in Macca. They were afraid of losing their religious status among the Arabs and thereby losing those pilgrims who used to come paying homage to their gods:

﴿ وَقَالُوا إِن نَّتَّبِعِ الْهُدَىٰ مَعَكَ نُتَخَطَّفَ مِنْ أَرْضِنَا أَوَلَمْ نُمْكِن لَّهُمْ حَرَمًا ءَامِنًا مُّبِينًا ﴿٥٧﴾ ﴾

They say: "If we were to follow the guidance with thee, we should be snatched away from our land." Have We not established for them a secure sanctuary, to which are brought as tribute fruits of all kinds, a provision from Ourselves? But most of them understand not.

Al-Qasas (The Stories) 28: 57

The Qur'an reminds them and us that it is God who has made Macca a safe sanctuary and blessed it

﴿أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا جَعَلْنَا حَرَمًا ءَامِنًا وَيُتَخَطَّفُ النَّاسُ مِنْ حَوْلِهِمْ أَفَبِالْبَاطِلِ يُؤْمِنُونَ
وَبِالْغَيْبِ يَكْفُرُونَ﴾

Do they not then see that We have made a Sanctuary secure, and that men are being snatched away from all around them. Then, do they believe in that which is vain, and reject the Grace of Allah!
Al-Ankabut (The Spider) 29: 67

If we reject the signs of God and his blessing we face the prospect of His punishment:

﴿وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا قَرْيَةً كَانَتْ ءَامِنَةً مُطْمَئِنَّةً يَأْتِيهَا رِزْقُهَا رَغَدًا مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ
فَكَفَرَتْ بِأَنْعُمِ اللَّهِ فَأَذَقَهَا اللَّهُ لِبَاسَ الْجُوعِ وَالْخَوْفِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَصْنَعُونَ﴾

Allah sets forth a Parable: a city enjoying security and quiet, abundantly supplied with sustenance from every place: yet was it ungrateful for the favours of Allah: so Allah made it taste of hunger and terror (in extremes) (closing in on it) like a garment (from every side), because of the (evil) which (its people) wrought.

An-Nahl (The Bees) 16: 112

﴿وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ مِنْهُمْ فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَأَخَذَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ وَهُمْ ظَالِمُونَ﴾

And there came to them a Messenger from among themselves, but they falsely rejected him; so the Wrath seized them even in the midst of their iniquities.

An-Nahl (The Bees) 16: 113

Therefore, the opposition of Quraish was political and economic and the fear of its leaders of losing their power and influence. The

Qur'an gives us the example of those who refuse to accept the truth unless it suits their purpose:

﴿ وَيَقُولُونَ ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَبِالرَّسُولِ وَأَطَعْنَا ثُمَّ يَتَوَلَّى فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ وَمَا أُولَئِكَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴾ ﴿٤٧﴾

They say, "We believe in Allah and in the Messenger, and we obey": but even after that, some of them turn away: they are not (really) Believers.

An-Nur (The Light) 24: 47

﴿ وَإِذَا دُعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ إِذَا فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ ﴾ ﴿٤٨﴾

When they are summoned to Allah and His Messenger, in order that He may judge between them, behold, some of them decline (to come).

An-Nur (The Light) 24: 48

﴿ وَإِن يَكُنْ لَهُمُ الْحَقُّ يَأْتُوا إِلَيْهِ مُذْعِنِينَ ﴾ ﴿٤٩﴾

But if the right is on their side, they come to him with all submission.

An-Nur (The Light) 24: 49

﴿ أَفِي قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ أَمْ ارْتَابُوا أَمْ يَخَافُونَ أَنْ يَحِيفَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَرَسُولُهُ ۚ بَلْ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴾ ﴿٥٠﴾

Is it that there is a disease in their hearts? Or do they doubt, or are they in fear, that Allah and His Messenger will deal unjustly with them? Nay, it is they themselves who do wrong.

An-Nur (The Light) 24: 50

We learn to accept the truth and to submit to God and obey God's messenger:

﴿ إِنَّمَا كَانَ قَوْلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذَا دُعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ أَنْ يَقُولُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا ۗ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴾

The answer of the Believers, when summoned to Allah and His Messenger, in order that he may judge between them, is no other than this: they say, "We hear and we obey": it is such as these that will attain felicity.

An-Nur (The Light) 24: 51

﴿ وَمَنْ يُطِعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَخَشِيَ اللَّهَ وَيَتَّقِهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ ﴾

It is such as obey Allah and His Messenger, and fear Allah and do right, that will win (in the end).

An-Nur (The Light) 24: 52

Despite this fierce opposition the Prophet (PBUH) and his companions patiently persevered

They never lost hope, nor did they give up. They knew they were following the truth and that the help of Allah will come in due time. The Qur'an came down giving them hope and encouraging them to be patient and persevere:

﴿ فَاصْبِرْ كَمَا صَبَرَ أُولُو الْعَزْمِ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ وَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلْ لَهُمْ ۚ كَأَنَّهُمْ يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَ مَا يُوعَدُونَ لَمْ يَلْبَثُوا إِلَّا سَاعَةً مِّن نَّهَارٍ بَلِّغْ فَهَلْ يُهْلِكُ إِلَّا الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴾

Therefore patiently persevere, as did (all) Messengers of inflexible purpose; and be in no haste about the (Unbelievers). On the Day that they see the (Punishment) promised them, (it will be) as if they had not tarried more than an hour in a single day. (Thine but) to proclaim the Message: but shall any be destroyed except those who transgress?

Al-Ahqaf 46: 35

And

﴿ أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ مَسَّتْهُمُ الْبَأْسَاءُ
وَالضَّرَّاءُ وَزُلْزَلُوا حَتَّى يَقُولَ الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَعَهُ مَتَى نَصُرُ اللَّهُ ۗ أَلَا إِنَّ نَصْرَ اللَّهِ

﴿ قَرِيبٌ ﴿٢١٤﴾

Or do ye think that ye shall enter the Garden (of Bliss) without such (trials) as came to those who passed away before you? They encountered suffering and adversity, and were so shaken in spirit that even the Messenger and those of faith who were with him cried: "When (will come) the help of Allah" ah! verily, the help of Allah is (always) near!

Al-Baqara (The Cow) 2: 214

Previous messengers faced rejection and abuse, and they patiently persevered till the help of Allah and victory came:

﴿ قَدْ نَعْلَمُ إِنَّهُ لَيَحْزُنُكَ الَّذِي يَقُولُونَ ۗ فَإِنَّهُمْ لَا يُكَذِّبُونَكَ وَلَٰكِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ بِءَايَاتِ

﴿ اللَّهُ تَجْحَدُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

We know indeed the grief which their words do cause thee: it is not thee they reject: it is the Signs of Allah, which the wicked contemn.

Al-Ana'm (The Cattle) 6: 33

﴿ وَلَقَدْ كُذِّبَتْ رُسُلٌ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ فَصَبَرُوا عَلَىٰ مَا كُذِّبُوا وَأَوْدُوا حَتَّىٰ أَتَاهُمْ نَصْرُنَا ۗ وَلَا

﴿ مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكَ مِنْ نَبِيِّئِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾

Rejected were the Messengers before thee: with patience and constancy they bore their rejection and their wrongs, until Our aid did reach them: there is none that can alter the Words (and Decrees) of Allah. Already hast thou received some account of those Messengers.

Al-Ana'm (The Cattle) 6: 34

The concept of social justice

People are not equal in their wealth or earnings, some are rich and others are poor. The Qur'an tells us that it is God who favors some over others in regard to how much money they have:

﴿وَاللَّهُ فَضَّلَ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ فِي الرِّزْقِ ۗ﴾

Allah has bestowed His gifts of sustenance more freely on some of you than on others

An-Nahl (The Bees) 16: 71

And

﴿قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ مَلِكُ الْمَلِكِ تُؤْتِي الْمَلِكَ مَن تَشَاءُ وَتَنْزِعُ الْمَلِكَ مِمَّن تَشَاءُ وَتُعِزُّ مَن تَشَاءُ وَتُذِلُّ مَن تَشَاءُ بِإِذْنِكَ الْخَيْرُ إِنَّكَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٦٦﴾﴾

Say: "O Allah! Lord of Power (and Rule), Thou givest Power to whom Thou pleasest, and Thou strippest off Power from whom Thou pleasest: Thou enduest with honour whom Thou pleasest, and Thou bringest low whom Thou pleasest: in Thy hand is all Good. Verily, over all things Thou hast power.

Al-Imran (The Family of Imran) 3: 26

Being rich does not mean that we are favored by God because we are better than those who are poorer, or that we deserve this status or have special privilege. On the contrary, wealth is a responsibility and we will be asked to account for what we have done with God's money. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

(Every person will be asked on the Day of Judgment to account for four things: his life, what has he done; and his youth, did he use it properly or abuse it?; and his money: How did he earn it and how did he spend it; and his knowledge, what did he do with it?) Termedhi

Wealth can be a test and trial just as poverty and want can be a severe test:

﴿ وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ يَبْخُلُونَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ هُوَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ بَلْ هُوَ شَرٌّ لَهُمْ سَيُطَوَّقُونَ مَا بَخُلُوا بِهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ مِيرَاثُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

﴿ خَيْرٌ ﴾

And let not those who covetously withhold of the gifts which Allah hath given them of His Grace, think that it is good for them: nay, it will be the worse for them; soon shall the things which they covetously withheld be tied to their necks like a twisted collar, on the Day of Judgment. To Allah belongs the heritage of the heavens and the earth; and Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do.

Al-Imran (The Family of Imran) 3: 180

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was not rich and he and his family lived a simple life like any poor Muslim. This was a conscious decision because the Prophet wanted to set an example and to show that it is not wealth that determines a person's worth, rather it is his character and behavior.

Those who are wealthy are supposed to help the poor and needy and help social institutions that make life easier in the community. They are warned not to use their money or influence to enslave those who are poor and weak:

﴿ كَيْ لَا يَكُونَ دُولَةً بَيْنَ الْأَغْنِيَاءِ مِنْكُمْ ۗ

in order that it may not (merely) make a circuit between the wealthy among you.

Al-Hashr (The Gathering) 59: 7

This concept that the poor and needy and our relatives have a right in our money is stressed in the Qur'an:

﴿ أُولَئِكَ يَرَوْنَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

﴿ ﴾

See they not that Allah enlarges the provision and restricts it, to whomsoever He pleases? Verily in that are Signs for those who believe.

Ar-Rum (The Romans) 30: 37

﴿ فَآتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ وَالْمِسْكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِينَ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴾

So give what is due to kindred, the needy, and the wayfarer. That is best for those who seek the Countenance, of Allah, and it is they who will prosper.

Ar-Rum (The Romans) 30: 38

And

﴿ وَآتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ وَالْمِسْكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَلَا تُبَذِّرْ تَبْذِيرًا ۚ ﴾

And render to the kindred their due rights, as (also) to those in want, and to the wayfarer: but squander not (your wealth) in the manner of a spendthrift.

Al-Isra'a (The Night Journey) 17: 26

This concept of helping the poor and needy and not using our wealth and power to enslave others and to lessen the differences between members of the society is called social justice. It was mentioned in the Qur'an long before it was discovered by Western philosophers in the 19th century. The Qur'an encourages us to give in charity in order to help the poor and needy, and promises that such a charity is good for us and forgives our sins.

﴿ إِن تَقْرَضُوا اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا يُّضْعِفْهُ لَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ شَكُورٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴾

If ye loan to Allah a beautiful loan, He will double it to your (credit), and He will grant you Forgiveness: for Allah is Most Ready to appreciate (service), Most Forbearing,

At-Taghabun (Mutual gain and loss) 64: 17

The money that we give helps those who need our help, creates jobs and improves the economy. In contrast, if we hoard our money we are threatened with severe punishment from God:

وَالَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ الذَّهَبَ وَالْفِضَّةَ وَلَا يُنْفِقُونَهَا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ



And there are those who bury gold and silver and spend it not in the Way of Allah: announce unto them a most grievous penalty.

At-Tawba (The Repentance) 9: 34

﴿يَوْمَ تَحْمَىٰ عَلَيْهِمَا فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ فَتُكْوَىٰ بِهَا جِبَاهُهُمْ وَجُنُوبُهُمْ وَظُهُورُهُمْ ۗ هَذَا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ﴾

On the Day when heat will be produced out of that (wealth) in the fire of Hell, and with it will be branded their foreheads, their flanks, and their backs, "This is the (treasure) which ye buried for yourselves: taste ye, then, the (treasures) ye buried!"

At-Tawba (The Repentance) 9: 35

Chapter Two The Concept of Hijra (Immigration)

In this chapter we will discuss the following concepts:

- 1-Why people immigrate from one place or one country to another?
- 2-What is the real meaning of immigration in Islam
- 3-The Hijra to Habasha (Ethiopia) and the lessons that we learn from this Hijra
- 4-The Hijra from Macca to Madina and its lessons and morals

Why do people immigrate from one place to another or from one country to another country?

In history famines did occur in certain parts of the world, and people immigrated to another place where there is food and where they can survive. Such Hijra occurred to the Children of Israel when famine occurred in Palestine and they came to Egypt seeking food and provisions. The Qur'an tells us about these difficult years and how Prophet Youseff (Joseph) saved Egypt from famine:

﴿ قَالَ تَزْرَعُونَ سَبْعَ سِنِينَ دَأْبًا فَمَا حَصَدْتُمْ فَذَرُوهُ فِي سُنْبُلِهِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِمَّا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴾



(Joseph) said: "For seven years shall ye diligently sow as is your wont: and the harvests that ye reap, ye shall leave them in the ear, except a little, of which ye shall eat.

Youseff (Joseph) 12: 47

﴿ ثُمَّ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ سَبْعٌ شِدَادٌ يَأْكُلْنَ مَا قَدَّمْتُمْ لَهُنَّ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِمَّا تُحْصِنُونَ ﴾



"Then will come after that (period) seven dreadful (years), which will devour what ye shall have laid by in advance for them, (all) except a little which ye shall have (specially) guarded.

Youseff (Joseph) 12: 48

﴿ ثُمَّ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ عَامٌ فِيهِ يُغَاثُ النَّاسُ وَفِيهِ يَعْرِضُونَ ﴾

"Then will come after that (period) a year in which the people will have abundant water, and in which they will press (wine and oil)."

Youseff (Joseph) 12: 49

The brothers of Youseff came to Egypt seeking provisions:

﴿ فَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ قَالُوا يَا أَيُّهَا الْعَزِيزُ مَسَّنَا وَأَهْلَنَا الضُّرُّ وَجِئْنَا بِبِضْعَةٍ مُزَجَّلَةٍ فَأَوْفِ

لَنَا الْكَيْلَ وَتَصَدَّقْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَجْزِي الْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ ﴾

Then, when they came (back) into (Joseph's) presence they said: "O exalted one! distress has seized us and our family: we have (now) brought but scanty capital: so pay us full measure, (we pray thee), and treat it as charity to us: for Allah doth reward the charitable."

Youseff (Joseph) 12: 88

Another reason people immigrate is seeking a better life for themselves and their families, or seeking further knowledge or education. Many people come to the United States seeking higher education or experience in scientific fields. After living here for years they get used to the ease of life and conveniences and stay here. They build families and communities and establish places of worship and educational institutions. This occurred to several minorities and ethnic groups in America like the Irish and Italians. Also the Jews and more recently the Muslims established a presence and a community here in America.

Immigrants face several problems including earning a living and trying to fit in a pleural society without sacrificing their heritage and culture. Some succeed interacting with and becoming part of their community, while maintaining their faith, traditions and culture. While others feel lost and threatened and therefore, they build barriers and live isolated from the larger community. They only associate with people of similar background and culture. They live here in America physically, but emotionally and culturally they are still back home where they came from. Their children suffer from a double identity. When they are with their parents they speak and behave in one way. And when they are with their peers they try to fit in and acquire habits different from what they are taught at home. Still others completely forget their heritage and distance themselves from anything that reminds

them of where they came from. They want to be Americans, but unfortunately only pick up superficial traits and bad habits.

Each immigrant community go through these growing pains and phases of holding on to their traditions, trying to fit in and discovering a balance and feeling comfortable with being productive members of society, while at the same time acknowledging and being proud of their faith and traditions.

Another reason people immigrate is looking for a safe place where they can practice their faith and convictions without fear of oppression. This was the main reason many of God's prophets immigrated, setting a precedent for us to follow. The Qur'an describes the Hijra of Prophets Ibrahim and Lut from their place of birth and where they grew up to another place where they felt they can serve God and be faithful to their convictions:

﴿ فَتَأْمَنَ لَهُ لُوطٌ وَقَالَ إِنِّي مُهَاجِرٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٢٦﴾ ﴾

But Lut had faith in him: he said: "I will leave home for the sake of my Lord: for He is Exalted in Might, and Wise."
Al-Ankabut (The Spider) 29: 26

And

﴿ وَقَالَ إِنِّي ذَاهِبٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي سَيَهْدِينِ ﴿٩٩﴾ ﴾

He said: "I will go to my Lord! He will surely guide me!"
As-Saffat 37: 99

And

﴿ وَجَعَلْنَاهُ لُوطًا إِلَىٰ الْأَرْضِ الَّتِي بَارَكْنَا فِيهَا لِلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٧١﴾ ﴾

But We delivered him and (his nephew) Lut (and directed them) to the land which We have blessed for the nations.
Al-Anbia'a (The Prophets) 21: 71

Musa left Egypt afraid for his life and went to Madyan:

﴿فَرَجَّ مِنْهَا خَائِفًا يَتَرَقَّبُ قَالَ رَبِّ نَجِّنِي مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٢١﴾﴾

He therefore got away therefrom, looking about, in a state of fear. He prayed: "O my Lord! save me from people given to wrong-doing."

Al-Qasas (The Stories) 28: 21

﴿وَلَمَّا تَوَجَّهَ تَلْقَاءَ مَدْيَنَ قَالَ عَسَىٰ رَبِّي أَن يَهْدِيَنِي سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ ﴿٢٢﴾﴾

Then, when he turned his face towards (the land of) Madyan, he said: "I do hope that my Lord will show me the smooth and straight Path."

Al-Qasas (The Stories) 28: 22

The Muslims faced persecution in Macca. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) advised some to immigrate to Habasha (Ethiopia) where there was a Christian king hoping that they will find shelter in his kingdom and justice.

The Qur'an explains our obligation in worshipping God and not surrendering to oppression. If we are unable to live our lives as Muslims and be faithful to our faith and convictions because of religious persecution, then it is necessary to immigrate to a safer place where we are free to practice our Islam. The excuse that we are oppressed is not accepted:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَفَّيْنَاهُمُ الظَّالِمِينَ أَنفُسِهِمْ قَالُوا فِيمَ كُنَّا قَالُوا كُنَّا مُسْتَضْعَفِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا أَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَرْضُ اللَّهِ وَسِعَةً فَهَاجِرُوا فِيهَا قَالُوا لَيْسَ لَنَا مَا نُوَلِّيهُمْ وَسَاءَ مَا مَصِيرًا ﴿٤٧﴾﴾

When angels take the souls of those who die in sin against their souls, they say: "In what (plight) were ye?" They reply: "Weak and oppressed were we in the earth." They say: "Was not the earth of Allah spacious enough for you to move yourselves away (from evil)?" Such men will find their abode in Hell, what an evil refuge!

An-Nesa'a (The Women) 4: 97

All the earth belongs to Allah. We can worship Allah in any place:

﴿ يِعْبَادِي الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنَّ أَرْضِي وَاسِعَةٌ فَإِنِّي فَاعْبُدُونِ ﴿٥٦﴾ ﴾

O My servants who believe! truly, spacious is My Earth: therefore serve ye Me, (and Me alone)!

Al-Ankabut (The Spider) 29: 56

The only excuse for not immigrating to a safer place is our utter weakness and inability to leave. The Qur'an gives hope that on such weak vulnerable souls Allah may still bestow His mercy:

﴿ إِلَّا الْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانَ لَّا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ حِيلَةً وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ

سَبِيلًا ﴿٩٨﴾ ﴾

Except those who are (really) weak and oppressed, men, women, and children who have no means in their power, nor (a guide-post) to direct their way.

An-Nesa'a (The Women) 4: 98

﴿ فَأُولَٰئِكَ عَسَىٰ اللَّهُ أَن يَعْفُوَ عَنْهُمْ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا ﴿٩٩﴾ ﴾

For these, there is hope that Allah will forgive: for Allah doth blot out (sins) and forgive again and again.

An-Nesa'a (The Women) 4: 99

The real meaning of immigration in Islam

We explained that people migrate from place to another for various reasons. Some seek a better life for themselves and their families; others seek further education and experience; while others migrate fleeing from religious oppression seeking a safer place where they can practice their Islam

But Hijra has a wider and more comprehensive meaning in Islam. Hijra is to avoid what Allah and His messenger has made forbidden. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

(The Muslim is the person who other Muslims fear no harm from his tongue or hand; and the Muhajir (The immigrant) is the person who avoids what Allah has made forbidden)

Narrated by Bokhari, Abou Dawood & Nesa'ee.

Major sins are obvious and are avoided by Muslims, such as the sin of murder, adultery, being unkind or abusive to our parents, stealing from others, gambling or drinking alcohol. Other sins that should also be avoided include lying or giving false witness, cheating others and talking ill about others behind their backs. Other sins include wasting our time in useless activities and not helping those who need our help. A Muslim should feel in his heart that all these sins, whether major or minor sins are to be avoided. What we are trying to do is get closer to God and acknowledge His blessings. How can we please God or get closer to Him if we are committing sins and mistakes and doing things He has made forbidden and told us not to do?

Those who are God-conscious feel ashamed when they make a mistake or commit sin. They turn to God in repentance and seek His forgiveness right away. And God has promised to forgive us if we are sincere in our repentance and do good and not commit that mistake again:

﴿ وَإِنِّي لَغَفَّارٌ لِّمَن تَابَ وَءَامَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا ثُمَّ اهْتَدَىٰ ﴾

"But, without doubt, I am (also) He that forgives again and again, to those who repent, believe, and do right, who, in fine, are ready to receive true guidance."

Ta Ha 20: 82

And

﴿ إِلَّا مَن تَابَ وَءَامَنَ وَعَمِلَ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا فَأُولَٰئِكَ يُبَدِّلُ اللَّهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ حَسَنَاتٍ ۗ

وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا ﴾

Unless he repents, believes and works righteous deeds, for Allah will change the evil of such persons into good, and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful,

Al-Furqan (The Criterion) 25: 70

Some people, on the other hand, do not think much of what sin or error they have done and to them it is not a big deal. The Qur'an gives us an example of this behavior when some in Madina spread rumors about Aesha and her honor. They listened to the false accusations and did not stand up and reject such lies. They did not think they were committing anything major or wrong:

﴿ إِذْ تَلَقَّوْنَهُ بِأَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَتَقُولُونَ بِأَفْوَاهِكُمْ مَا لَيْسَ لَكُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَتَحْسَبُونَهُ هَيِّنًا وَهُوَ

عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٥﴾

Behold, ye received it on your tongues, and said out of your mouths things of which ye had no knowledge; and ye thought it to be a light matter, while it was most serious in the sight of Allah.

An-Nur (The Light) 24: 15

﴿ وَلَوْلَا إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ قُلْتُمْ مَا يَكُونُ لَنَا أَنْ نَتَكَلَّمَ بِهَذَا سُبْحَانَكَ هَذَا بُهْتَنٌ عَظِيمٌ

﴿١٦﴾

And why did ye not when ye heard it, say "It is not right of us to speak of this: glory to Thee (our Lord) this is a most serious slander!"

An-Nur (The Light) 24: 16

﴿ يَعِظُكُمُ اللَّهُ أَنْ تَعُودُوا لِمِثْلِهِ أَبَدًا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٧﴾

Allah doth admonish you, that ye may never repeat such (conduct), if ye are (true) Believers.

An-Nur (The Light) 24: 17

If we get used to committing minor sins gradually it will lead to major sins, or the multiplicity of minor sins is considered a major sin to Allah. Those who understand their accountability will do their best to avoid minor sins and learn from their mistakes and avoid repeating the same mistake. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

(A believer does not allow himself to be bitten from the same hole twice) Narrated by Ahmad, Bokhari & Muslim.

The Hijra to Habasha

The Muslims were oppressed by Quraish, and many were abused and tortured. The leaders of Quraish put pressure on the Muslims in order to kill this new faith that threatened their society. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) gave permission to some Muslims to migrate to Habasha and told them that the King of Habasha is just and wrongs no one and told them to stay there till Allah delivers them from their difficulty. This first Hijra consisted of twelve men and four women, headed by Othman Bin Affan and his wife, the daughter of Prophet Muhammad. This first Hijra occurred in the fifth year after the revelation.

The Quraish did not sit idle. They sent a delegation to Habasha with gifts to the king, his ministers and priests in an attempt to influence them and asked the king to return those Muslims to Macca so that their own people would deal with them. The king refused to hand over the Muslims until he had a chance to hear from them. Ja'afar Bin Abi Talib explained the state of unbelief and the moral decay that existed before Islam. Then he explained how Allah sent them a messenger from amongst themselves and how he ordered them to believe in Allah, and to pray, and to give charity, and to speak the truth, and to fulfill their trusts, and to be good to their neighbors and not to abuse the weak. Ja'afar told the king that they came to his kingdom seeking freedom to live their life according to these principles after their own people tortured them and persecuted them.

The king wanted to hear something of the Qur'an. So Ja'afar recited verses from Surat Marioum (Chapter 19 Mary) in the Qur'an. It describes Jahya (John the Baptist) and Marium (Mary) and how Eisa (Jesus) was conceived:

﴿ يَنْزَكِرِيَا إِنَّا نُبَشِّرُكَ بِغُلْمٍ أَشْمُهُد تَحْيَىٰ لَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُد مِن قَبْلُ سَمِيًّا ﴿٧﴾ ﴾

(His prayer was answered): "O Zakariya We give thee good news of a son: his name shall be Yahya: on none by that name have We conferred distinction before."

Marium (Mary) 19: 7

﴿ قَالَ رَبِّ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي غُلْمٌ وَعَافِي عَاقِرًا وَقَدْ بَلَغْتُ مِنَ الْكِبَرِ عِتِيًّا ﴾



He said: "O my Lord! how shall I have a son, when my wife is barren and I have grown quite decrepit from old age?"

Marium (Mary) 19: 8

﴿ قَالَ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ رَبُّكَ هُوَ عَلَيَّ هَيِّنٌ وَقَدْ خَلَقْتُكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلَمْ تَكُ شَيْئًا ﴾

He said: "So (it will be): thy Lord saith, 'That is easy for Me: I did indeed create thee before, when thou hadst been nothing!'"

Marium (Mary) 19: 9

And

﴿ يَيِّحِي خُذِ الْكِتَابَ بِقُوَّةٍ ۖ وَءَاتَيْنَاهُ الْحُكْمَ صَبِيًّا ﴾

(To his son came the command): "O Yahya! take hold of the Book with might": and We gave him Wisdom even as a youth.

Marium (Mary) 19: 12

﴿ وَحَنَانًا مِّن لَّدُنَّا وَزَكَاةً ۖ وَكَانَ تَقِيًّا ﴾

And pity (for all creatures) as from Us, and purity: he was devout,

Marium (Mary) 19: 13

﴿ وَرَبًّا بَوَالِدَيْهِ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ جَبَّارًا عَصِيًّا ﴾

And kind to his parents, and he was not overbearing or rebellious.

Marium (Mary) 19: 14

﴿ وَسَلَامٌ عَلَيْهِ يَوْمَ وُلِدَ وَيَوْمَ يَمُوتُ وَيَوْمَ يُبْعَثُ حَيًّا ﴾

So Peace on him the day he was born, the day that he dies, and the day that he will be raised up to life (again)!

Marium (Mary) 19: 15

And

﴿ وَأَذْكُرُ فِي الْكِتَابِ مَرْيَمَ إِذِ انْتَبَذَتْ مِنْ أَهْلِهَا مَكَانًا شَرْقِيًّا ﴿١٦﴾ ﴾

Relate in the Book (the story of) Mary, when she withdrew from her family to a place in the East.

Marium (Mary) 19: 16

﴿ فَأَتَّخَذَتْ مِنْ دُونِهِمْ حِجَابًا فَأَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهَا رُوحَنَا فَتَمَثَّلَ لَهَا بَشَرًا سَوِيًّا ﴿١٧﴾ ﴾

She placed a screen (to screen herself) from them; then We sent to her Our angel, and he appeared before her as a man in all respects.

Marium (Mary) 19: 17

﴿ قَالَتْ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِالرَّحْمَنِ مِنْكَ إِنْ كُنْتَ تَقِيًّا ﴿١٨﴾ ﴾

She said: "I seek refuge from thee to (Allah) Most Gracious: (come not near) if thou dost fear Allah."

Marium (Mary) 19: 18

﴿ قَالَ إِنَّمَا أَنَا رَسُولُ رَبِّكِ لِأَهَبَ لَكِ غُلَمًا زَكِيًّا ﴿١٩﴾ ﴾

He said: "Nay, I am only a Messenger from thy Lord, (to announce) to thee the gift of a holy son."

Marium (Mary) 19: 19

﴿ قَالَتْ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي غُلَمٌ وَلَمْ يَمَسِّنِي بَشَرٌ وَلَمْ أَكْ بَغِيًّا ﴿٢٠﴾ ﴾

She said: "How shall I have a son, seeing that no man has touched me, and I am not unchaste?"

Marium (Mary) 19: 20

﴿ قَالَ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ رَبُّكَ هُوَ عَلَيَّ هَيِّئٌ وَلَنَجْعَلَنَّ آيَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَرَحْمَةً مِنَّا وَكَانَ أَمْرًا

﴿ مَّقْضِيًّا ﴿٢١﴾ ﴾

He said: "So (it will be): thy Lord saith, 'That is easy for Me: and (We wish) to appoint him as a Sign unto men and a Mercy from Us': it is matter (so) decreed."

Marium (Mary) 19: 21

On listening to these Qur'anic verses the king and his priests were so moved that they wept. The king asked Ja'afar what do they say about

Eisa? Ja'afar said: (We say what we are taught by our prophet. He is the messenger of Allah; His spirit and His word that He breathed into the virgin Mary). The king said: (These words and what was revealed to Eisa (Jesus) came from the same source). He told the Quraish delegation that the Muslims were free to stay and worship as they please in his kingdom. The Qur'an confirms that Eisa is the word of God and His spirit, but explains that Eisa is not the son of God:

﴿ يَتَأَهَّلَ الْكِتَابَ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ وَلَا تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقَّ إِنَّمَا الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَكَلِمَتُهُ أَلْقَاهَا إِلَى مَرْيَمَ وَرُوحٌ مِّنْهُ فَفَآمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَلَا تَقُولُوا ثَلَاثَةً انْتَهُوا خَيْرًا لَّكُمْ إِنَّمَا اللَّهُ إِلَهُ وَاحِدٌ سُبْحَانَهُ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا ﴿١٧١﴾ ﴾

O People of the Book! commit no excesses in your religion: nor say of Allah aught but the truth. Christ Jesus the son of Mary was (no more than) A Messenger of Allah, and His Word, which He bestowed on Mary, and a Spirit proceeding from Him: so believe in Allah and His Messengers. Say not "Trinity": desist: it will be better for you: for Allah is One God: glory be to Him: (far Exalted is He) above having a son. To Him belong all things in the heavens and on earth. And enough is Allah as a Disposer of affairs.

An-Nesa'a (The Women) 4: 171

The word of God is His will and decree when He wills something and it becomes according to His will:

﴿ إِنَّمَا قَوْلُنَا لِشَيْءٍ إِذَا أَرَدْنَاهُ أَنْ نَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴿٤٠﴾ ﴾

For to anything which We have willed, We but say the Word, "Be", and it is.

An-Nahl (The Bees) 16: 40

The spirit of God is the Angel Jibreel (Gabriel) the angel of revelation. God sent Jibreel to Marium and he appeared to her as a man and gave her the news of her getting pregnant with Jesus:

﴿ فَاتَّخَذَتْ مِنْ دُونِهِمْ حِجَابًا فَأَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهَا رُوحَنَا فَتَمَثَّلَ لَهَا بَشَرًا سَوِيًّا ﴿١٧﴾ ﴾

She placed a screen (to screen herself) from them; then We sent to her Our angel, and he appeared before her as a man in all respects.

Marium (Mary) 19: 17

﴿ قَالَتْ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِالرَّحْمَنِ مِنْكَ إِنْ كُنْتَ تَقِيًّا ﴿١٨﴾ ﴾

She said: "I seek refuge from thee to (Allah) Most Gracious: (come not near) if thou dost fear Allah."

Marium (Mary) 19: 18

﴿ قَالَ إِنَّمَا أَنَا رَسُولُ رَبِّكِ لِأَهَبَ لَكِ غُلَامًا زَكِيًّا ﴿١٩﴾ ﴾

He said: "Nay, I am only a Messenger from thy Lord, (to announce) to thee the gift of a holy son."

Marium (Mary) 19: 19

And

﴿ وَإِنَّهُ لَتَنْزِيلُ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٩٢﴾ ﴾

Verily this is a Revelation from the Lord of the worlds:

Ash-Shura'a (The Poets) 26: 192

﴿ نَزَلَ بِهِ الرُّوحُ الْأَمِينُ ﴿١٩٣﴾ ﴾

With it came down the Spirit of Faith and Truth,

Ash-Shura'a (The Poets) 26: 193

﴿ عَلَىٰ قَلْبِكَ لِتَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُنذِرِينَ ﴿١٩٤﴾ ﴾

To thy heart and mind, that thou mayest admonish

Ash-Shura'a (The Poets) 26: 194

The Qur'an has an effect on those who listen trying to understand. It affects their hearts and minds as they realize it is the truth from their Lord. The Qur'an explains this effect it has:

﴿ وَإِذَا سَمِعُوا مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ تَرَىٰ أَعْيُنُهُمْ تَفِيضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ مِمَّا عَرَفُوا مِن
 الْحَقِّ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا ءَامَنَّا فَكُتِبْنَا مَعَ الشَّاهِدِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾

And when they listen to the revelation received by the Messenger, thou wilt see their eyes overflowing with tears, for they recognise the truth: they pray: "Our Lord! we believe; write us down among the witnesses.

Al-Maeda (The Table) 5: 83

﴿ وَمَا لَنَا لَا نُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَمَا جَاءَنَا مِنَ الْحَقِّ وَنَطْمَعُ أَنْ يُدْخِلَنَا رَبُّنَا مَعَ الْقَوْمِ

الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾

"What cause can we have not to believe in Allah and the truth which has come to us, seeing that we long for our Lord to admit us to the company of the righteous?"

Al-Maeda (The Table) 5: 84

Lessons from the Hijra to Habasha

1-When believers feel for their safety they should immigrate to a safe haven where they can practice their Islam. Muslims in America are free to worship and practice their Islam without oppression. They are obviously facing misinformation and attacks on their religion and stereotyping of Muslims in a negative way. It is also difficult to raise their children according to Islamic principles. These challenges can be overcome through the efforts of parents and other Muslim families and a strong Muslim community and through Islamic schools and Islamic centers of learning. Through these collective efforts a proper Islamic education can be provided and achieved. Muslims living in America have the advantage of freedom of expression with no religious persecution, and being well off economically.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) once warned of the danger of living among unbelievers but his words were taken out of historical context. He said: (I am free of any Muslim who resides among those who worship others besides Allah, their faith is not the same) Narrated by Abou Dawood. The Prophet (PBUH) was referring to an incident that occurred at his time when a group of Muslims decided to stay in

Macca rather than immigrate to Madina to be with their brothers in Islam. They were killed by the Quraish. The Prophet, therefore, was saying that he bears no guilt for what happened to them. It was their choice and decision to immigrate or stay behind. This Hadeeth does not mean that Muslims cannot live with non-Muslims in a country like America. It only applies if we fear for our safety, then we must immigrate to a safe place where we can practice our Islam.

2-The bond that unites Muslims and Christians is a strong bond based on faith in God and in being accountable to Him. Muslims regard Christians as brothers and sisters in faith, having received a divine revelation from God. Muslims believe in the Bible and in Eisa as God's messenger to the Children of Israel. The Qur'an Stresses these concepts:

﴿ نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَأَنْزَلَ التَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ ﴾

It is He Who sent down to thee (step by step), in truth, the Book, confirming what went before it; and He sent down the Law (of Moses) and the Gospel (of Jesus).

Al-Imran (The Family of Imran) 3: 3

﴿ مِنْ قَبْلُ هَدَى لِلنَّاسِ وَأَنْزَلَ الْفُرْقَانَ ﴾

Before this, as a guide to mankind, and He sent down the Criterion (of judgment between right and wrong

Al-Imran (The Family of Imran) 3: 4

And

﴿ قُلْ ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ

وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَالنَّبِيُّونَ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ

وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴾

Say: "We believe in Allah, and in what has been revealed to us and what was revealed to Abraham, Isma'il, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and in (the Books) given to Moses, Jesus, and the Prophets, from their Lord: we make no distinction between one and another among them, and to Allah do we bow our will (in Islam)."

Al-Imran (The Family of Imran) 3: 84

The Qur'an tells us to treat the people of the Book (Jews & Christians) with kindness and justice, and to say those things that are good and to work together to improve life for everyone in our community. The Qur'an does not tell us to hate Jews or Christians, unless they behave as enemies, but to say that we believe in the revelation sent to us and in that sent to them and that our God and their God is indeed the one and same God:

﴿ وَلَا تُجَادِلُوا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ وَقُولُوا ءَامَنَّا بِالَّذِي أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَأُنزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ وَإِلَهُنَا وَإِلَهُكُمْ وَاحِدٌ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴾

And dispute ye not with the People of the Book, except with means better (than mere disputation), unless it be with those of them who inflict wrong (and injury); but say, "We believe in the Revelation which has come down to us and in that which came down to you; our God and your God is One; and it is to Him we bow (in Islam)."

Al-Ankabut (The Spider) 29: 46

And

﴿ لَتَجِدَنَّ أَشَدَّ النَّاسِ عَدَاوَةً لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا وَلَتَجِدَنَّ أَقْرَبَهُمْ مَوَدَّةً لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّا نَصْرِي ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ مِنْهُمْ قِسِيِينَ وَرُهْبَانًا وَأَنَّهُمْ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴾

Strongest among men in enmity to the Believers wilt thou find the Jews and Pagans; and nearest among them in love to the Believers wilt thou find those who say, "We are Christians": because amongst these are men devoted to learning and men who have renounced the world, and they are not arrogant.

Al-Maeda (The Table) 5: 82

This verse does not mean that the Jews are always enemies to the Muslims, or that the Christians are always friendly. It only reflects the political situation in Madina at the time of Prophet Muhammad, and the enmity that existed between the Jewish tribes and the Muslims. We will explore this relationship in more detail when we discuss the political situation in Madina at the time of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

3- Ja'afar was not afraid to speak the truth. We too should have no problem in standing up and defending what we believe in. We are free to express ourselves and we should exercise this right. Islam is misrepresented and Muslims are painted in a negative image. It is our duty to correct misinformation and bias and prejudice:

﴿يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَن يَرْتَدَّ مِنكُمْ عَن دِينِهِ ۚ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ ۗ
أَذِلَّةٍ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَعِزَّةٍ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةَ
لَآئِمٍ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٥٤﴾﴾

O ye who believe! if any from among you turn back from his Faith, soon will Allah produce a people whom He will love as they will love Him, lowly with the Believers, mighty against the Rejecters, fighting in the Way of Allah, and never afraid of the reproaches of such as find fault. That is the Grace of Allah, which He will bestow on whom He pleaseth. And Allah encompasseth all, and He knoweth all things.

Al-Maeda (The Table) 5: 54

And

﴿ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِّمَّنْ دَعَا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا وَقَالَ إِنَّنِي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴾

Who is better in speech than one who calls (men) to Allah, works righteousness, and says, "I am of those who bow in Islam?"

Fusselat (Explained in detail) 41: 33

4-A good idea cannot be killed. The Kuffar in Macca were able to torture the Muslims and make life very difficult for them, but were not able to prevent the truth of Islam from spreading. The Qur'an explains their attempts but promises that Allah will safeguard His religion:

﴿ يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَيَأْبَى اللَّهُ إِلَّأ أَنْ يُتِمَّ نُورَهُ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ

الْكَافِرُونَ ﴾

Fain would they extinguish Allah's Light with their mouths, but Allah will not allow but that His Light should be perfected, even though the Unbelievers may detest (it).

At-Tawba (The Repentance) 9: 32

﴿ هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ

كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ ﴾

It is He Who hath sent His Messenger with Guidance and the Religion of Truth, to proclaim it over all religion, even though the Pagans may detest (it).

At-Tawba (The Repentance) 9: 33

