

How to prevent our children from becoming terrorists?

BS Foad, MD 2015

Terrorist organizations are praying on the mind of young vulnerable men and women, in the name of Islam in an attempt to recruit them in what they call Jihad. They are using social media and are luring those vulnerable and unaware of their evil, and couching their message as striving in the way of Allah.

The reason these kids may be at risk and vulnerable include the following:

1-They are being called upon to do Jihad and fight the enemy of Islam. Our children may be fooled into this trap because of the clever way the terrorists are couching their message, that America is fighting Muslims and waging a war on Islam. Therefore, it is the duty of Muslims all over the world to support and join in Jihad against the “enemies of Islam”.

2-Some of our children may not feel that they belong here in America, or that their loyalty is with those fighting in the name of Islam. Some of them had no time to integrate in American society, and may feel alienated or discriminated against, and are searching for a goal or vision. Some may be disadvantaged socially and economically.

3- Some may not be connected to other Muslims or to the mosque or Islamic center, or may be getting the wrong message.

4-Their religious education may be lacking or those teaching them religion on line are teaching a message of hate and violence. Their understanding of the Qur’an is superficial and distorted.

It is through **education and having an open conversation** with our children, and **listening** to their views and engaging them, that we can counter the threat coming from Jihadist websites.

We will discuss the following concepts:

- 1- Jihad.
- 2- Islam is compatible with Western democracy.
- 3- That Human life is sacred in Islam
- 4- The relationship between Muslims & non-Muslims
- 5- The West is not at war with Islam, but with Muslim terrorists

What is Jihad?

Jihad is to strive in the way of Allah with one's soul and possessions, and has a great reward. It is part of faith:

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي
 سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ

The believers are those who believe in Allah & His messenger, then had no doubts, and strive in the way of Allah with their possessions and souls: such are the true sincere ones

Al-Hujerat (The Apartments) 49: 15

There are many forms of Jihad:

- 1-Jihad to control our vain desires and become masters of ourselves
- 2-Jihad to resist the temptations of Satan, and live our lives as Allah has commanded
- 3-Jihad to correct misconceptions, and misrepresentation of Islam
- 4-Fighting to defend home and country against aggression

If we fall prey to our lusts and desires we become slaves to these desires:

﴿ أَرَأَيْتَ مَنْ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ أَفَأَنْتَ تَكُونُ عَلَيْهِ وَكِيلًا ﴿٤٣﴾ أَمْ تَحْسَبُ أَنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ

يَسْمَعُونَ أَوْ يَعْقِلُونَ ۚ إِنَّ هُمْ إِلَّا كَالْأَنْعَامِ ۖ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا ﴿٤٤﴾ ﴿

Do you see the person who has taken his lusts as his god, can you be a disposer of affairs for him? Or do you think that most of them are able to hear or to reason, No, they are like cattle, they are even misguided

Al-Furqan (The Criterion) 25: 43 & 44

Those who chose to follow their own way are vulnerable to the evil temptations of Satan, since they deprived themselves of God's protection and guidance:

﴿ وَآتَلُّ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ الَّذِي ءَاتَيْنَاهُ ءَايَاتِنَا فَانْسَلَخْنَا مِنْهَا فَاتَّبَعَهُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْغَاوِينَ ﴿١٧٥﴾

وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَرَفَعْنَاهُ بِهَا وَلَكِنَّهُ أَخْلَدَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ

Relate to them the story of the person to whom We gave Our signs, but he separated himself from them; so Satan followed him and he succumbed to temptation and misguidance. If it was Our will, We would have elevated him by Our signs, but he inclined to the earth and followed his own desires

Al-Araf 7: 176

In contrast, those who obey Allah and live their life as He commanded, and are righteous are protected by Allah from Satan and his bad influence. They remember Allah and things become clear to them:

﴿ وَإِنَّمَا يَنْزَعَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نَزْغٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٠٠﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا

مَسَّهُمْ إِذَا طَافُوا مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تَذَكَّرُوا فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٢٠١﴾ ﴿

If an evil thought from Satan assaults your mind, seek protection in Allah, for He hears and knows all things. Those who are righteous, when an evil thought from Satan assaults them bring Allah to remembrance, and lo! They are able to see things clearly

Al-Araf 7: 200 & 201

Islam and the Muslims are stereotyped, misrepresented and distorted in the news media, and the views of radicals and extremists are shown to paint a picture of Islam as a backward religion, not suitable for our times and not compatible with Western democracy. The Qur'an told us to expect these attacks, and tells us how to react:

﴿ لَتَبْلَوُنَّ فِي أَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَلَتَسْمَعُنَّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ

وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا أَذًى كَثِيرًا ۖ وَإِنْ تَصَبَرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ ﴾

You are going to be tested and tried in your possessions and in yourselves; and you are going to hear much that will grieve you from those who received divine revelation before you, and from those who worship multiple gods; but if you patiently persevere, and guard against evil, this requires resolve and determination

Al-Imran (The Family of Imran) 3: 186

So what is required is not an emotional reaction, or anger or doing something wrong like burning buildings or killing innocent people or issuing threats against those who are distorting or mocking the Qur'an or the Prophet (PBUH). Rather, we should **contrast the lies and falsehood they say to the truth**. It is an opportunity to explain the message of the Qur'an and its teachings, and to explain the kind gentle caring character of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his teachings. We should not be surprised at these

attacks, as they keep coming again and again, and understand that it is a long difficult road, and that we must be patient and resolved.

We need to explain **the concept of fighting in Islam**, and show that it is only indicated when one is defending one's home and country against aggression. Fighting is only allowed in the way of Allah and not for personal reasons. No transgression is allowed in Islam:

﴿ وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقْتُلُونَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴾

And fight in the way of Allah those who fight you, and do not commit aggression, for Allah loves not aggressors

Al-Baqara (The Cow) 2: 190

This verse is clear that fighting in Islam is for defensive purposes, to defend one's home and country, and not to conquer land or subjugate people. Fighting is only allowed for Allah, not for personal glory. When Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was asked: a man fights with courage, and a man fights for conviction, and a man fights for profit, who is fighting in the way of Allah? He said: (Only those who fight to make the word of Allah supreme are fighting in the way of Allah) Bokhari. The Qur'an confirms this concept, as it states that fighting is allowed to ensure that people are able to worship and serve God with no oppression:

﴿ وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةً وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ لِلَّهِ فَإِنْ انْتَهَوْا فَلَا عُدْوَانَ إِلَّا عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ ﴾



And fight them until there is no more persecution, and the religion becomes that of Allah; if they cease then there is no hostility except those who practice wrong-doing

Al-Baqara (The Cow) 2: 193

The Qur'anic verse also orders Muslims not to transgress or be wrong-doers in war. Killing women, children, the elderly, and those in retreat, and innocent souls not involved in the fighting is forbidden in Islam. Destroying buildings and burning crops is also not allowed.

If offers of peace are proposed they should be accepted. The goal is not war but peace that is just:

﴿ وَإِنْ جَنَحُوا لِلسَّلْمِ فَاجْنَحْ لَهَا وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴾

If they incline towards peace, then you too should incline towards peace, and put your trust in Allah, for He is the One who hears and knows all things

Al-Anfal (Spoils of war) 8: 61

Islam is compatible with Western democracy

The principles of **justice, freedom, accountability and pursuit of happiness** in the American constitution are in fact Qur'anic principles. Therefore there is no clash between Islam and democracy.

Justice should be a cornerstone of any society, for all the people, regardless of their faith or convictions. The Qur'an urges Muslims to be just and not allow their likes and dislikes color or influence their judgment and interaction:

﴿ يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدِينَ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ ﴾

﴿ إِنْ يَكُنْ غَنِيًّا أَوْ فَكِيرًا فَاللَّهُ أَوْلَىٰ بِهِمَا ۖ فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْهَوَىٰ أَنْ تَعْدِلُوا ۚ وَإِنْ تَلَوْرًا أَوْ تَعْرِضُوا ۚ

﴿ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ﴾

O you who believe stand up for justice, as witnesses for Allah, even against yourselves, or parents or kin; should he be rich or poor, Allah is better to take care of them; do not follow your vain desires otherwise you will deviate from justice; and if you distort or decline to do justice know that Allah is well aware of all that you do

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

And

﴿يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ ءَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا ءَعْدِلُوا هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٨﴾﴾

O you who believe stand up for Allah, as witnesses for the truth; let not the hatred of others make you unjust; be just, that is closer to piety; and be conscious of Allah, for Allah is well-acquainted with all that you do

Al-Maeda (The Table) 5: 8

Justice is for Muslims and non-Muslims alike, and for poor or rich, weak or powerful, regardless of ethnic origin, faith or tradition.

Freedom

Every person should feel safe regarding his life, possessions, family, faith and freedom of expression. Human life is sacred, and we should safeguard and protect the right of everyone to his possessions, and safeguard and protect his family.

No one is to be forced to become a Muslim against his will, because Allah gave mankind a choice to accept faith or reject faith. This free choice makes man responsible and accountable. The Qur'an stresses this freedom of faith:

فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفُرْ ۗ

Let him who will believe, and let him who will reject faith

Al-Kahf (The Cave) 18: 29

The Qur'an forbids oppression or compulsion in religion:

﴿لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ ۗ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ ۗ﴾

Let there be no compulsion in religion; truth stands clear from error

Al-Baqara (The Cow) 2: 256

It is not the will of Allah that everyone on earth would believe. Therefore we are not allowed to force people to become Muslims against their will:

﴿وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَأَمَنَّ مِنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ كُلَّهُمْ جَمِيعًا ۖ أَفَأَنْتَ تُكْرِهُ النَّاسَ حَتَّىٰ يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ ۗ﴾



If it was the will of your Lord, then everyone on earth would have believed; are you then forcing people to believe against their will?

Yunus (Jonah) 10: 99

The Qur'an values the human mind and considers it a gift from Allah. Therefore, anything that clouds the mind or impairs our judgment is not allowed in Islam, like alcohol and drugs.

Many verses in the Qur'an end by asking: "Do you not think"; "Do you not consider"; "Do you not reflect". The Qur'an encourages Muslims to ask

questions in order to learn, and to think and reflect on the Qur'an. In other words we should study the Qur'an in a logical way, and ask questions:

﴿ كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ ۖ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٣٨﴾ ﴾

A book, full of blessings, that We sent down to you, in order that they may consider its verses, and that people of understanding may reflect and consider

Sa' D 38: 29

We learn from the Seerah of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) that he valued freedom of expression. Despite the great harm of the hypocrites in Madinah the Prophet (PBUH) did not silence them or imprison them, rather he waited patiently until their true nature became apparent through their actions. Also in the slander incident (Hadeeth Al-Ifk), despite being attacked in his honor and his wife accused, the Prophet (PBUH) did not silence those spreading rumors in Madinah. He waited patiently for 4 weeks till the Qur'an came down proving the innocence of Aesha, and warning the Muslims of their wrong behavior and admonishing them.

Accountability

We learn from the Qur'an that every soul is held responsible for its choice and accountable for its actions. Allah is just and everything is taken into consideration, and none will be treated unjustly:

﴿ يَوْمَ تَأْتِي كُلُّ نَفْسٍ تُجَادِلُ عَنْ نَفْسِهَا وَتُوَفَّىٰ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴾



On the Day when every soul will come pleading for itself, and every soul will be requited according to its actions, and none will be dealt with unjustly

An-Nahl (The Bees) 16: 111

And

﴿ وَأَتَّقُوا يَوْمًا تُرْجَعُونَ فِيهِ إِلَى اللَّهِ ^ط ثُمَّ تُوَفَّى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿١١١﴾



And fear a Day when you will be brought back to Allah, then every soul will be requited according to what it has earned, and none will be treated unjustly

Al-Baqara (The Cow) 2: 281

In a democracy we elect representatives who legislate laws that govern our behavior. As Muslims living in America we respect and abide by the law of the land. The Qur'an tells us to obey those charged with authority among us:

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِيَ الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ ^ط ﴿٥٩﴾

O you who believe obey Allah, and obey the messenger, and those charged with authority among you

An-Nesa'a (The Women) 4: 59

However, such obedience has limits. If the ruler transgresses and disobeys Allah and his messenger, then no obedience is required. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: (There is no obedience to a human being if it entails disobeying Allah) Narrated by Ahmad & Hakim.

The pursuit of happiness

Everything that Allah made available and provided for his servants is allowed, unless there is a clear text in the Qur'an or Sunnah prohibiting or forbidding this. The Qur'an states:

﴿ قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ ۖ وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ ﴾

Say: "Who has made unlawful the beauty that Allah has produced for his servants, and the pure and good sustenance

Al-Araf 7: 32

And

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَحْرِمُوا طَيِّبَاتِ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴾

﴿ وَكُلُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ حَلالًا طَيِّبًا ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي أَنْتُمْ بِهِء مُؤْمِنُونَ ﴾

O you who believe do not make unlawful the good things that Allah made lawful for you, and do not transgress, for Allah loves not transgressors. And eat of the good and lawful things that Allah provided for you, and be conscious of Allah in whom you believe

Al-Maeda (The Table) 5: 87 & 88

However, such enjoyment is governed by two criteria. First we should be moderate and not excessive in the way we spend and live. The Qur'an describes God's righteous servants as those who are not misers, nor excessive in spending:

﴿ وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَنْفَقُوا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوا وَكَانَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ قَوَامًا ﴾

And those who when they spend are not spendthrift nor misers, but follow a course in between

Al-Furqan (The Criterion) 25: 67

The other criterion is that we always remember our accountability to Allah, and understand that the enjoyment in this life is temporary, but what Allah has for his servants in paradise is better and ever- lasting:

﴿ وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَمَتَّعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَزِينَتُهَا وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾



Whatever you have is the conveniences of this life and its glitter, but what Allah has for you is better and ever-lasting; will you not then consider?

Al-Qasas (The Stories) 28: 60

Human life is sacred in Islam

Some terrorist groups have killed innocent people, Muslims and non-Muslims alike

The Qur'an is clear and specific that human life is sacred, and that no one is allowed to kill another human being unless it be for murder, or spreading corruption on earth:

﴿ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ ﴿٣٣﴾

Do not kill the soul that Allah has made sacred except through due process of law

Al-Isra'a (Night Journey) 17: 33

And

﴿ مِنْ أَجْلِ ذَلِكَ كَتَبْنَا عَلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنَّهُ مَن قَتَلَ نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ
فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَمَنْ أَحْيَاهَا فَكَأَنَّمَا أَحْيَا النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا ۚ ﴾

Because of this We ordained on the Children of Israel that if anyone kills a human being, unless it be for murder or spreading corruption on earth, it will be considered as if he killed all of mankind; and if anyone saves a life, it is considered as if he saved all of mankind

Al-Maeda (The Table) 5: 32

Therefore, the killing of innocent human being is forbidden and condemned in the Qur'an & in the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH).

Treating the people of the Book (Christians & Jews)

Most scholars have examined the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims when non-Muslims were the minority and living under Muslim rule. Few have commented on the situation in America where Muslims live as a minority among a Christian majority.

The Qur'an is clear, that in the absence of war, then the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims is based on kindness, justice, cooperation, talking to each other in a good way, and working together to improve life for everyone, respecting the right of non-Muslims to their faith and not forcing them to Islam against their will, and not prejudging their fate.

Kindness and justice

لَا يَنْهَىٰكُمْ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِينِكُمْ أَنَّ تَبْرُوهُمْ وَتُقْسَطُوا

إِلَيْهِمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسَطِينَ ﴿٨٠﴾

Allah forbids you not, regarding those who do not fight you because of your faith, nor drive you out of your homes, to be kind and just to them, for Allah loves those who are just

Al-Mumtahina (Woman to be examined) 60: 8

Cooperation and working together

﴿وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ ۖ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ﴾

And cooperate and work together in virtue and righteousness, but not in sin or transgression

Al-Maeda (The Table) 5: 2

Talking to each other in a good way

﴿وَقُلْ لِعِبَادِي يَقُولُوا الَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ ۚ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَنْزِعُ بَيْنَهُمْ ۚ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ كَانَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ

عَدُوًّا مُّبِينًا ﴿٥٣﴾

Tell my servants to say that which is better, for Satan incites enmity between them, for Satan to man is an avowed enemy

Al-Isra'a (Night Journey) 17: 53

Respecting the right of non-Muslims to their faith and not forcing them to become Muslims against their will

﴿لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ﴾

Let there be no compulsion in religion

Al-Baqara (The Cow) 2: 256

And

﴿ وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَأَمَنَّ مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كُلَّهُمْ جَمِيعًا أَفَأَنْتَ تُكْرِهُ النَّاسَ حَتَّىٰ يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴾



If it was the will of your Lord then everyone on earth would have believed, are you then forcing people to believe against their will?

Yunus (Jonah) 10: 99

Not prejudging the fate of non-Muslims

فَإِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ الْبَلْغُ وَعَلَيْنَا الْحِسَابُ

Your duty is to deliver the message, it is Our duty to call them to account

Ar-Ra'd (The Thunder) 13: 40

Is the West at war with Islam?

The West, and the whole world is at war with terrorists, whether they are Muslims or not. Something needs to be done to combat terror, and America is taking the lead role.

But the West is not at war with main stream Islam or main stream Muslims. Actually Muslims and Muslim governments are at war with Muslim terrorists. Most of the people killed by these terrorists have been Muslims. They have

no regard for human life. Nothing is sacred or safeguarded under their authority. Anyone who is not with them they consider him to be against them and their enemy, whether he is a Muslim or non-Muslim. They also regard the Shi'a as non-Muslims and have no problem in killing them.

Muslim terrorists in their propaganda to young vulnerable minds state that America and other Western powers are at war with Islam. They point to the occupation of Muslim countries like Afghanistan and Iraq by American troops. They try to rally support for their cause by issuing a call to Jihad to defend Islam from Infidels.

Of course the war and occupation in Afghanistan and Iraq is wrong, and American troops occupied these Muslim countries under false pretense. But that does not mean that we heed the call to Jihad issued by terrorists who have no legitimacy and whose actions is un-Islamic.

They have caused more damage to Islam and the Muslims themselves than what can be done by the enemies of Islam.

How can we prevent our children from becoming terrorists? BS Foad, MD 2015

Terrorist organizations are preying on the mind of young vulnerable men and women, in the name of Islam, to recruit them in what they name Jihad. The only way to counter this threat is by open discussion and listening to our children, and through education

1-Islam is not at war with the West & the West is not at war with mainstream Islam. The whole world is at war with Terrorists and extremists The Qur'an teaches us that we need to treat non-Muslims with justice and kindness, and talk to them in a good way, and work with them to improve life for everyone in our community, unless they act like enemies:

"God forbids you not, regarding those who do not fight you because of your faith nor drive you out of your homes from treating them with kindness and justice" Al-Mumtahina (woman to be examined) 60: 8

"And work together and cooperate in virtue and righteousness, but not in sin or transgression" Al-Maeda 5: 2

As Muslims we respect the right of non-Muslims to their faith, and we do not force them to become Muslims against their will: "Let there be no compulsion in religion" Al-Baqara (The Cow) 2: 256;

"If it were the will of your Lord then everyone on earth would have believed; are you then forcing people to believe against their will?" Yunus (Jonah) 10: 99

2-As Muslims we belong here in America and we add to its diverse culture.

"O My servants who believe indeed my earth is spacious, therefore worship Me" Al-Ankabut (The Spider) 29: 56

The saying of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH): (I am free of any Muslim residing among Mushrekeen, their faith is not the same) Narrated by Abou Dawood, must be understood in historical context. He was referring to a group of Muslims who did not immigrate to Madinah and stayed in Macca, and were killed.

The principles of freedom, justice, accountability and pursuit of happiness in the American constitution are all Qur'anic principles. *"O you who believe stand up for Allah, as witnesses for justice; and let not the hatred of others make you unjust; be just that is closer to piety"* Al-Maeda (The Table) 5: 8; *"On the Day when every soul will come pleading for itself, and every soul will be requited according to its deeds, and none will be wronged"* An-Nahl (The Bees) 16: 111; *"A Book which We sent to you, full of blessings, in order that those of understanding may consider its signs"* Sa'D 38: 29; *"Say: "Who has made it forbidden the beauty that Allah produced for his servants and the good and pure sustenance"* Al-Araf 7: 32

The Prophet (PBUH) did not suppress the hypocrites or those spreading rumors to ensure freedom of expression

3-We need to correct misconceptions about Jihad. Fighting is required in order to defend our home & country against aggression, but not for personal reasons. We do not fight or kill our fellow Muslims

"And fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but commit no aggression, for Allah loves not transgressors" Al-Baqara 2: 190. Fighting has morals and guidelines, and prisoners of war are treated well. Women, children & the elderly and those not involved in the fighting are not to be harmed. The call to Jihad only comes from those qualified, not from a person who appoints himself as a leader.

4-Our Children may be getting the wrong message about Islam, and those teaching them may be teaching a message of hate and violence, distorting the noble teaching of the Qur'an. We need to have an **open discussion with our children and listen to them and answer their questions in a logical way.** This way we can contrast the truth to the propaganda and distortion in social media. Human life is sacred in Islam, and suicide is condemned in the Qur'an. The Qur'an does not tell us to hate non-Muslims, or enslave their women & children.