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The Role of Values in Social Change: An Analysis from The Qur'ānic Perspective

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Abstract

In the post-industrial revolution world, social change is often studied and understood in the context of change in means of production, mobility, urbanization and change in the constitution of workforce. Role of ethical values is generally confined to personal conduct and manners. Industrial society is supposed to have its own work ethics which may or may not agree with personal ethics and morality. Ethics and morality are generally considered, in the Western thought, as a social construct. Therefore, with the change in means of production or political system, values and morality are also expected to be re-adjusted in order to cope with the changed environment. Sometimes a totally new set of values emerges as a consequence of the change in economic, political, or legal set up. The present research tries to understand the meaning and place of these values in a global socio-cultural framework. Relying essentially on the divine principles of the Qur'ān it makes an effort to understand relevance of these universal and ultimate principles with human conduct and behavior in society. It indicates that essentially it is the core values, principles, or norms which guide human beings in their interpersonal, social, economic and political matters. Islam being a major civilizing force, culture, and the way of life, provides values which guide both in individual and social matters. The values given by the Qur'ān and the Sunnah are not monopoly of the Muslim. These values are universal and are relevant in a technological society.

Keywords: Values, Islamic perspective, social construct, universalism, social change.

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Introduction

The rise and fall of world civilization have always been studied in the light of economic, political, and social agents of change. Economically stable and self-reliant communities are considered to have longer life when compared with economically un-stable and dependent nations. Similarly, political stability is one major factor responsible for sustainability and progress of a society. Militarily strong countries with well-equipped armies are supposed to have more chances of maintaining their sovereignty. While countries, with internal insecurity, often face threats even from their own neighbouring countries.

Notwithstanding all these factors social change remains a complex phenomenon. Though these and similar factors are internally linked and often change become inevitable when these factors are not appropriately synergized. One major factor i.e. ethics and morality is not given its due importance in investigations into reasons for rise and fall of nations. Ethics and morality are generally considered in the Western thought, a social construct. Therefore, with the change in means of production, or political system values and morality are expected to re-adjust to a changed environment. Sometimes a totally new set of values emerges as a consequence of change in economic, political or legal set up.

A civilization, in our view, represents the process of internalizing what is regarded the ultimate concern and values into a finite, tangible and the manifest socio-economic and political order. The ultimate values, principles, and norms are what finally determine the way of life of a nation and its civilization and culture.

Islam as the great civilizing force, a culture, and the way of life, provides a set of ultimate values for the individual as well as for the socio-economic and political life of man. The values given by the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah* make Islamic civilization and culture unique, paramount, and universal.

The present research tries to understand the meaning and place of universal Islamic values, in socio-cultural change and development. Relying essentially on the divine principles of the *Qur'ān* it makes an effort to understand relevance of these universal and ultimate principles with human conduct and behavior in society. It indicates that essentially it is the core values, principles, or norms which guide human beings in their interpersonal, social, economic, and political behavior.

Needless to say, values in the western empirical intellectual tradition refer to those norms which gradually assume ultimacy in a given space - time. Continuous practice and tradition grant these values sanctity and moral authority. On the other hand, in an Islamic context, values stand for universal revealed principles (*wahī*) which provide basis for a holistic development of human behavior in society. These values directly influence and regulate social conduct and behavior of people. Sociologists, anthropologists and cultural historians in the empirical intellectual tradition, trace origin of values in local traditions and customs of a people. They refer to their native conventions, rituals, ceremonies and social practices to understand the origin of their values.¹ It is generally believed, with a shift in social behavior and traditions of a people, their values also go through a substantial change. The age of colonialism provides a classical example to this phenomenon. Wherever the European colonialists established their rule, they tried their best to displace the native culture, dress, food and habitation in the name of “civilizing” the “heathens”, “backward” and

¹Lewis Henry Morgan, *Ancient society or Researches in the Lines of Human Program From Savagery Through Barbarianism to Civilization* (Cleveland: The World Publication Co, 1963), 211; Robert Marton, Leonard Brown, and Leonard S. Cothrell, *Sociology Today Problems and Prospects* (New York: Harper co Row, 1965), 1: 2.

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“uncultured” natives.² In Europe a transition from an agricultural society to an urban and industrial society was not a matter of shift in economy alone. It was essentially an axiological shift, a substitute set of values emerged with the change in the means of production. Likewise, the present corporate culture has introduced its own corporate values.

Islamic values draw their inspiration and authority neither from social constructs nor from the individual preferences or collective good of a people at a given space and time. The instructions and guidance that resides in the *Qur'ān* or the *Sunnah* carries a universal character. These are neither an outcome of a subjective and personal religious experience of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) nor a product of social evolution of the customs and traditions of the Makkan tribes. Values and norms in the Islamic framework are given. They do not acquire normativeness and sanctity through an evolutionary social process. Revelatory nature of values and norms make them unique and universal.

Universality:

Islamic values do not originate in the soil of Arabia or for that matter any specific territory. These values are not particular to a rural or urban social setting. They address humanity as such. Many of the customs and traditions of the Arabs were consequently, removed, some others modified, and brought in conformity with the divine and universal values of the *Qur'ān*. This divine and universal origin of these values makes them universally applicable in human society.

² See William Howells, *The Heathens Primitive Man and his Religions* (New York: Anchor Book, 1962), 74. Also see, Lucien Levy-Bruhl, *Primitive Mentality* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966), 139; *Primitive Views of the World*, ed. Stanley Diamond (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), 331.

Does it mean that Islam does not recognize nor provide any room for particularity? Let it be said very candidly that with its primary concern for universalism, Islam allows for diversity. For example, the universal value of *haya* and covering *satar-‘awrah* (parts of human body to be covered) may be translated in one local community in the form of a very baggy Kurdish or Turkish trouser, or Pakistani *shalwar*, while the same principle may be translated in the form of a normal Baloch or Sindhi female’s loose long shirt, full of embroidery work on it. An Indonesian or Malaysian may use a *sarong* or a *baji korum* for the same purpose, a Nigerian may wear one over the other several layers of loose colorful robes. The value of *taqwa* may be translated in one case by observing additional late-night prayers. While in another case the same value may lead believers to establish a social welfare centre to teach skills or establish a free educational institute or an interest-free micro-finance bank. These manifestations may be different yet the universal value and principle of *haya* (modesty) and *taqwa* or Allah consciousness remain one and the same.

Values in an Islamic framework also refer to a hierarchy in which a rubric of values precedes certain other values. For example, the value of *tawhīd* precedes all other values, even the value of *‘adl*.

This brief discussion on the meaning and nature of values and norms in Islam makes an effort to elaborate that: -

- a) Values and norms are not created by local customs or practices of a people.
- b) Values and norms do not necessarily change with the change in the means of production and distribution.
- c) The values and norms of Islam are not gender specific, neither patriarchal nor matriarchal.

- d) The Islamic values and norms provide the basic framework, and foundation of economic, social, legal, educational, and cultural development and progress in a given society.
- e) The system of values given by the Qur'ān, due to its universality has a universal application to the so called post-technological culture as well as in a less developed society.

To begin with, the core value which makes Islam a holistic system remains *tawhīd*. All other values are subservient to it. All other values are also organically related with *tawhīd* or Oneness and Uniqueness of Allah *subhānahu wata'ālā* and to His Authority.

Tawhīd provides the basis on which any given society develops its Islamic identity and character. An Islamic social, political, economic, legal, cultural and educational system, in a given human situation, is essentially a translation of value of *tawhīd* in various domains. A replacement of traditional values by the universal Islamic values, invariably, leads to a shift in the social, legal, cultural, educational and political institutions in a society.

Tawhīd the principle of Unity and Uniqueness:

Qur'ān clearly states that its primary objective is to provide guidance (*hidāyah*) to human beings in how to relate themselves with their Creator, the Universe, and His creations and bring a revolutionary value based ethical social change in human societies. The ethics thus offered is not confined to individual mannerism. It provides guidance and guidelines for social, economic, political, cultural, and legal behavior of man.

Tawhīd in the scheme of values is the highest value and principle underscored by the *Qur'ān*.³ This value and principle is to be fully internalized and manifested in human behavior, just as it is reflected in the universe:

“Do they now seek a religion other than that prescribed by Allah and this despite all that is in the heavens and the earth is in submission to Him – willingly or unwillingly – and to Him all shall return”.⁴

This recognition and acceptance (*Islam*) of Allah’s Authority, consequently, makes everything in the universe, including man, *Muslim*, subservient to the value of *tawhīd*. However, at a conscious and rational level human beings have been given freedom of choice, to exercise their judgment and act in order to please Allah or act contrary to His directives and annoy Him. This freedom of the will is not enjoyed by any other than humans and jinn, thus making human even superior to all other creatures. This is why in another place the *Qur'ān* mentions that man has been created in best of the moulds, as such, it is his capacity of ethical judgment which elevates his status.⁵

Tawhīd as the cosmic principle illustrates relationship between Cosmos or universes, their Creator and mankind. Since everything in Cosmos willingly or unwillingly has assumed obedience to commands, laws, and directions given to it by the Creator, it is therefore only rational for the human beings not to consider nature as sacred or worthy of worshipping.

Inviting human intellect to look critically on cosmos, man’s own constitution and functioning as well the biological, botanical and underwater

³ “We raised a Messenger in enemy community (to tell them) serve Allah and shun the Evil one (*taghūt*)” Al-Qur’an 16:36

⁴ Al-Qur’an 3: 83

⁵ “Surely, We created man in the best mold, then we reverted him to the lowest of the low, except those who have faith and do righteous deeds. There’s is a never-ending reward.” Al-Qur’an 95:4-6.

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world, the *Qur'ān* frequently raises the question, can this global synergy be a work of a finite being or an accident or it has to be the work of the Only Creator. It further questions all doctrines and concepts of dualism which assume existence of a realm of the holy and a realm of the profane time and space.

Tawhīd is more than a theology. It is the highest value and principle which operates in the life of the individual, society and universe. It determines the direction of the economic, political, social, legal, and educational development in a society. It furnishes the purpose and meaning in life. *Tawhīd* creates a conscious behavior and an attitude of uniformity and conformity in the life of the individual and the society. It liberates man from internal and external conflicts. It emancipates man from his self-made ideologies, systems, traditions, practices, and biases. Liberation of man from the bondage of race, colour, ethnicity, and gender race brings a dynamic approach in life.

A conscious realization of *tawhīd* helps an individual as well as the society in revisiting all social transactions in the light of *tawhīd*. Matters relating to social, cultural, economic, political, and legal aspects are brought in conformity with *tawhīd*, (acceptance of Allah *subhānahu wata'ālā* as final Authority). *Tawhīd* as a working principle is realized through social reform and change. It ultimately transforms the means of production, distribution and development in a given society. It requires a rigorous implementation of fairness, honesty, truth, quality control, and use of one and the same ethical standards.

The anti-dogmatism of *tawhīd* encourages intellectual and academic freedom. The blind following of the tradition of the past is replaced with critical, objective, and systematic analysis of the present and the past leading to new frontiers of knowledge. *Tawhīd* persuades an individual to respond to modern challenges and use a knowledge based *ijtihādi* approach in building a just and fair

social order wherein man could experience peace, equity, dignity, and ethical and moral environment. A supreme value, and in a sense essence of Islam, *tawhīd* operates within a rubric of other values, such as *‘ilm*, *‘adl*, *taqwa*, *birr*, *imān*, *dhikr*, *sabr*, *istiqāmah*, *jihād*, *falāh* and *iqāmat al dīn*.

‘Ilm (Knowledge)

The primacy of knowledge *‘ilm* is fully reflected in the first divine revelation in the form of five early *ayāt* of *al‘Alaq*

“Read (recite) in the name of Allah who created, created out of a congealed blood; Recite and your Lord is Most Generous, Who taught by the pen; Taught man what he knew not”⁶.

This culture of knowledge and learning is the hall mark of divine revelation. It was, as it were, a paradigm shifts from an oral to a knowledge based literary tradition. Every single revelation underscore rational thinking, evidence-based research and reflection while rejecting dogmatic thinking or fundamentalism. This quest for knowledge has no end. Knowledge in Islam is not accumulation of information, it is a journey into *hikmah*, learning leading to wisdom.

Knowledge refers to an organized body of information with a clear purpose and objective. Its quality and not just quantity make knowledge transcendent. At the same time with all creativity, inquisitiveness and talent, human knowledge has its limitations. Specially acquired knowledge and ultimate knowledge of things cannot be one and same. *Tawhīd* implies excellence and transcendence of Allah’s Knowledge, Authority and Power. Knowledge, in this backdrop, inculcates an attitude of yearning and desire to know more and more at a human level. Therefore, the *Qur’ān* reminds

⁶ Al-Qur’an 96:1-5

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“Are those who know equal to those who do not know, only those endowed with understanding take heed”⁷.

This quest for truth and knowledge allows an enlightened person to become more and more aware of impact of knowledge which leads to *khashyah*, humbling oneself in front of Allah *s.w.t*.

“It is only those who have knowledge among His servants that fear Allah”⁸.

The *Qur'ān* assumes that every human being has a potential to acquire knowledge; knowledge, consequently, becomes a virtue, a value, and a pre-requisite for *khilāfah* on earth. Sayeduna Adam, the first citizen of the world was gifted with knowledge, which justified his *khilāfah*.

It was knowledge given by Allah *s.w.t* to Prophet Adam, due to which angels were asked to bow down to him⁹. The reason for this recognition was not Adam's constitution from dust, but knowledge given to him by the Ultimate source of knowledge Allah *s.w.t*. This high priority allocated to knowledge and to realization of knowledge and truth is a recurring theme in the *Qur'ān*. Besides these five *ayāt* of the first revelation the same is underscored in other places in the *Qur'ān*: “The Merciful, One has taught the *Qur'ān*, Has created man, and has taught him articulate speech.”¹⁰

Seeking knowledge, in the *Qur'ān* is not a matter of privilege of a few. It, on the other hand, is a virtue, a value, and an obligation. Therefore, every believer is exhorted to seek advancement in knowledge both at qualitative and quantitative

⁷ Al-Qur'an 39:9

⁸ Al-Qur'an 35:28

⁹ “Then Allah taught Adam the names of all things and presented them to the angels and said “if you are right then tell the names of these things”. Al-Qur'an 2:31

¹⁰ Al-Qur'an 55:1-4

levels. Believers are taught to plead: “and say my Lord increase me in knowledge”¹¹.

'Adl (Justice)

In the hierarchy of values *'adl* enjoys no less than a paramount place. It has a close internal relationship of meaning with *tawhīd*. While *tawhīd* requires a person to dedicate all devotions and obedience to Allah *subhanahu wata'ala*, it also calls for fulfilment of duties toward Allah's creations with *'adl*. *Adl* demands fairness and justice at individual, social, economic, and interpersonal levels. *Adl* also refers to a balanced, moderate, and appropriate behavior and conduct. Deviation from *'adl*, in the Qur'ān is categorized as *zulm* (injustice and oppression). Unfortunately, the literal meaning of the terminology and its legal connotation overshadows the comprehensive understanding of *'adl* in academic discussions.

The fact of the matter is that *'adl* covers not only legal but practically every single aspect of human behavior. It refers to creation of balance, proportion, moderation, and beauty. Therefore, the Qur'ān refers to the "proportioned fashioning" of human being as *'adl*¹². It also refers to realization of law and order in society and dealing fairly with fellow human beings.¹³ *'Adl* also refers to socio-psychological fairness in family life.¹⁴ *'Adl* as a personality trait means not only to be fair, kind, loving with persons near to someone but even behave with strangers or even enemies with fairness:

¹¹ Al-Qur'an 20:114

¹² “Who created you, and made you well-proportioned” Al-Qur'an 82:7

¹³ “Call people to the same (faith) and be steadfast about it as you were commanded, and do not follow their desires and say (to them) I believe in the Book Allah has sent down. I have been commanded to establish justice among you”. Al-Qur'an 42:15.

¹⁴ “If you fear that you will not be able to treat them fairly then marry (only) one...” Al-Qur'an 4:3

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“Believers! Be upright bearers of witness for Allah and do not let enmity of any people move you to deviate from justice. Act justly, that is nearer to Allah consciousness. And fear Allah. Surely, Allah is well aware of what you do”¹⁵

Referring to the exercise of ultimate justice by Allah *subhanahu wata'ala* the Qur'ān talks about *'adl* as the basis of final judgment. It rejects the idea of intercession, and underscores merit and *a'mal* (one's actions) and Allah's compassion as the only basis of final judgment.¹⁶ *'Adl* as a value is so important that every believer is reminded again and again to inculcate this in his behavior. It is not an abstract value. It manifests care and concern for the needy, poor, and deserving.

"Surely, Allah enjoins *'adl* (kindness) and giving to relatives and forbids all that is shameful, evil and oppressive".¹⁷

This Qur'ānic *ayah* is an integral part of every *jumuah khutbah* all over the world which indicates the centrality of the value of *'adl* as depicted in the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*. The *ayah* begins with a command, to do *'adl* i.e. fair dealing with compassion toward relatives by spending on them and at the same time to take initiative in enjoining people to practice good (*ma'ruf*) and to proscribe all that is wrong, unethical, obscene, repulsive and rebellious. *'Adl* also refers to social good, generosity towards relations and the underprivileged and deprived in society. Protection of society from injustice and unethical conduct thus becomes a natural demand of *'adl*. Internalization of *tawhīd* and *'adl*, fair

¹⁵ Al-Qur'an 5:8

¹⁶ “And beware of the Day when no one shall avail another, when ransom shall be accepted from no one, when no one's intercession will profit anyone, when there will be no help from any quarter” Al-Qur'an 2:123

¹⁷ Al-Qur'an 16:90

and just behavior, develops the attitude of *taqwa*, another foundational Qur'ānic value.

Taqwa (Fearing Allah)

Taqwa is generally translated as fear of Allah *subhanahu wata'ala*. Perhaps a better rendering of the meaning will be Allah consciousness and fear of losing His love. *Taqwa* as a value presents an attainable behavioral trait at individual and social level. It is a state of satisfaction in which whatever is pleasing to Allah *s.w.t* is welcome and adopted without hesitation, and from whatever one is required to abstain, one does it with pleasure, extreme confidence, observance, conviction and satisfaction. “And whatsoever the Messenger gives you, take it and whatsoever he forbids, abstain and fear Allah verily Allah is severe in punishment.”¹⁸

Consequently, a believer feels content when observing duty toward Allah, taking Him as the Ultimate Authority in all matters, and confirms fully with what pleases Him. *Taqwa* has been usually misunderstood as wearing certain appearance. Therefore, when we hear the term, in our imagination we build image of a *muttaqi* person, no different than a hermit or a monk. The Qur'ān as well as the Sunnah has made it very explicit that *taqwa* is not withdrawal from world but participation in the worldly activities with a conscious and responsible behavior. Therefore, observing desirable mannerism in speech, peace-making, and keeping social relations has been often called the attitude of *taqwa*.

“Believers, when an ungodly person brings to you a piece of news, carefully ascertain its truth, lest you should hurt a people unwittingly and thereafter repent at what you did... If two parties of the believers happen to fight, make peace between them with justice (*'adl*), and be equitable for Allah loves the

¹⁸ Al-Qur'an 59:7

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equitable... Believers let not a group of men scoff at another group, it may well be that the later are better than they are. And do not taunt one another, nor revile one another by nicknames. It is an evil thing to gain notoriety for ungodliness after belief... Believers avoid being excessively suspicious, for some suspicion is sin. Do not spy, nor backbite one another, would any one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother, you would hate it, and have Allah's *taqwa*. Surely, Allah is the One who forgives and accepts repentance, most Merciful.”¹⁹

Taqwa in these *ayat* encompasses social ethics and morality. Disunity and discord in human societies begins when people have trust deficit, when they believe in rumors and when they back bite and talk ill about people around them. The attitude of taqwa demands shielding one another, reconciliation, creation of brotherhood and resolving conflict and clash. *Taqwa* here further refers to creation of peace and love in community of believers and humanity at large. Therefore, Allah consciousness (*taqwa*) should make a person ethically more and more inclined and committed toward fulfilling whatever contracts and agreements have been made even with the enemies:

“Those who are faithfully true to their trusts and to their covenants”²⁰

Taqwa requires firmly standing for truth:

“O you who believe, have Allah's *taqwa* and speak (only) truth”.²¹

Family life in Islam is regarded nucleus of society. The common sense understanding of piety and spirituality, on the contrary, in practically all world religions considers abstention, celibacy and world renunciation a sign of piety and holiness. Living a family life is regarded as worldly, secular, and unholy. The

¹⁹ Al-Qur'an 49:6-12

²⁰ Al-Qur'an 23:8

²¹ Al-Qur'an 33:70

Qur'ān, on the contrary, while elaborating on value of *taqwa* or piety, considers living family life a manifestation of *taqwa*;

"O mankind fear your *Rabb* who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate and out of the two spread many men and women. Fear Allah (*wattaquallah*) in Whose name you claim your rights and heed the ties of kinship. Surely Allah is ever watchful over you".²²

Taqwa elsewhere refers to doing one's utmost in observance of obligations with total commitment and trust in Allah *subhanahu wata'ala*.

Wealth generation, economic wellbeing, technological progress, scientific development, investments and other developmental activities are generally considered secular and worldly consequently, beyond the domain of "religion". The Qura'nic term *taqwa* on the contrary, stands for full involvement of a believer in economic and political matters, however with Allah conscience and total dissociation from exploitative economic system: "O you, who believe, observe your duty to Allah and give up what remains from usury if you are believers"²³.

The *āyah* considers rejection of all forms of usury and interest-based transactions an attitude of *taqwa*. Therefore, ethical and fair wealth generation cannot be considered a secular activity but a manifestation of *taqwa*. Since this attitude has been categorized as *taqwa*, it will be ridiculous to think that *taqwa* stands for world rejection. This does not mean that excellence in worship; devotion and prayer are not a desired behavior. It only means that attitude of *taqwa* does not mean withdrawal from many of those worldly activities which have been somehow interpreted as worldly and contrary to piety, religiosity and ethical behavior. Obedience, worship, and devotion are integrated in the wider

²² Al-Qur'an 4:1

²³ Al-Qur'an 2:278

concept of *taqwa*, “And whosoever obeys Allah and His Messenger and observes *taqwa*, such are the successful”.²⁴

The above resume on *taqwa* as a foundational value indicates that the scheme of values given by the *Qur'ān* is not theoretical but realistic. *Taqwa* as a value does not refer to a mystical living or ascetic monkhood. It refers to a behavior pattern and development of likes and dislikes in order to please Allah. It also indicates that *taqwa* as a value is not only functional and practical but a universally applicable behavior trait.

Birr (Virtue)

Birr or virtue is another core *Qur'ānic* value, usually interpreted as goodness. *Qur'ān* refers to it not only as doing well but as an important attribute of Allah *subhānahu wata'ālā* “Surely, He is al-Birr (the most Benign, Subtle, Courteous and Generous) the most Compassionate”.²⁵

This important attribute when understood as a prime value, means inculcation of a kind, generous and merciful attitude in interpersonal relations and in process of ethical social change. *Qur'ān* observes that those who remember Allah *subhānahu wata'ālā*, ponder over the surrounding universe, confirm their faith through their strict ethical behavior and never fail in making supplications to Allah *subhānahu wata'ālā*:

“O our *Rabb* we have heard a caller inviting us to faith, believe in You, so we believe. Our Lord forgive us our sins and remit from us our evil deeds and make us die the death of the righteous (*abrār*).”²⁶

²⁴ Al-Qur'an 24:52

²⁵ Al-Qur'an 52:28

²⁶ Al-Qur'an 3:193

Therefore, *birr* refers to conduct and behavior of people who dedicate their life and death only for the sake of Allah *subhānahu wata'ālā*. They seek help from patience *sabr*, perseverance *istiqāmah*, continuous struggle *jihād* and realization of system of *salāh*. They are always humbling themselves in front of their Lord. They established the system of *salāh* and *zakāh* in order to have social and economic change. Calling people towards system of *salāh* and system of *zakāh* has been interpreted as real attitude of *birr*

“Establish *salāh* and give *zakāh* and bow down (yourselves in obedience to Allah) along with those who bow down (*al-rāki'īn*); Do you enjoy *al-Birr* on the people (while) you forget your own selves though you recite the Scripture. Have you then no sense; and resort to patience and *salāh* for help, and truly it is extremely difficult and hard except for *al-khāsh'īn*, (those who fear Allah); who are certain that they are going to meet their Lord and to Him they are going to return”.²⁷

The *Āyah* advises believers to improve quality of their *ibadat*, like prayer and *zakāh* and fulfil their social obligation including inviting people to act righteously in order to achieve success in this world and in life hereafter.

It also makes clear that *birr*, righteousness, is not a matter of beautiful words, and sublime and illuminative discourses on ethical role of man. It, on the other hand, refers to manifest human conduct of mutual help, fulfilling of social responsibilities, and bringing social change. Attitude of *birr* consequently become compatible with *taqwa*. This dimension of *birr* is further elaborated by the *Qur'ān*:

Righteousness does not consist in turning your faces towards the east or towards the west; true righteousness (*birr*) consists in believing in Allah and the

²⁷ Al-Qur'an 2:43-46

Last Day, the Angels, the Books and the Prophets, and in giving away one's property in love of Him to one's kinsmen, the orphans, the poor, and the wayfarer and those who ask for help, and in freeing the neck of slaves, and in establishment of prayer and dispersing the *zakāh*. True righteousness is attained by those who are faithful to their promise once they have made it and by those who remain steadfast in adversity and affliction and at the time of battle. Such are the truthful ones; such are the (*muttaqun*) Allah conscious.²⁸

Al-birr therefore in its comprehensive understanding includes what is known as *aqīdah* as well as personal and public dealings. It includes observance of *'ibadat*, *salāh* and *zakāh* as well as attending to the orphan, the needy, the wayfarer, and supporting people in their struggle for liberation. This later aspect makes *birr* a unique comprehensive value. It further illustrates that success and felicity is not confined to simply facing towards the east or the west. Regular worship facing towards *ka'bah* and belief in angels alone and excellence in their performance may be regarded by some as a sign of righteousness (*taqwa*), but the *Qur'ān* at this point asserts that *birr* and *taqwa* is more than that. If Muslims or non-Muslims are persecuted and deprived of their human rights such as the lockdown in Indian held Kashmir and Palestine, *birr*, in this context means their moral, diplomatic and material help in order to liberate them from oppression. Just facing towards the east or the west will not constitute *birr* in such a critical situation. The conventional understanding of this value, taking *birr* as piety as a matter of excessive prayers, chanting beautiful names of Allah alone, wearing certain costumes, has led Muslim *ummah* to a gradual state of insensitivity toward the needy and oppressed, moral and ethical corruption and mental subjugation of the capitalist world order. A proper understanding of this value, on the contrary,

²⁸ Al-Qur'an 2:177

in its dynamic and revolutionary connotation, can be instrumental in enhancing commitment to social responsibility and strength in the Muslim *ummah*.

Birr as a value also stands for straightforwardness. It creates an attitude and a behavior pattern in the personality of believers to excel in *birr*, in order to reject all forms of deviations and observe sincerely all what Allah *subhānahu wata'āla* likes. The *Qur'ān* refers to a pre-Islamic custom of the Arabs who when in a state of *ahrām*, avoided entering their homes from the front door, and considered it piety. The *Qur'ān* directs the believers to be straightforward in their dealings and matters and not make life difficult for themselves. Birr, therefore, is not a situational value but a matter of continuous Allah consciousness. It is this Allah consciousness which paves the way of success in this world and in life hereafter.

The social dimension of *birr* is further elaborated by the *Qur'ān* when it talks about spending of wealth, one values, in the way of Allah in order to uplift the down trodden in the society, with a clear conscience and not to expect any recognition or return for the assistance and help offered. A common human weakness normally is what one likes for himself does not like to offer to others. The *Qur'ān* persuades believers to spend in the way of Allah, not what is over and excess and of no utility to them, but that which one loves to have for himself. “you will not attain piety (*birr*) until you spend of that which you love (for yourself). And whatsoever you spend, Allah is aware thereof.”²⁹

The scope of *birr* is further elaborated by the *Qur'ān*. Goodness and virtue is not limited to the fellow believers, in terms of interpersonal relationship, cooperation, and welfare. Extending its scope, the *Qur'ān* says: "But help you one another into righteousness (*birr*) and pious duty (*taqwa*). Help not one another

²⁹ Al-Qur'an 3:92

unto sin (*ithm*) and transgression (*'udwan*) and keep your duty to Allah (*wattaqullah*). Lo Allah is severe in punishment".³⁰

Here the general principle of cooperation in all righteous and virtuous matter is underscored. Even when it is a matter of acting with righteousness, which benefits not only a believer but an enemy, *birr* and good should be observed in the larger interest of the objectives of *shari'ah*. The general ethical principle of *ta'āwun*, cooperation in *birr* and non-cooperation in evil and wrong is applicable in all situations irrespective of its beneficiaries are Muslims or non-Muslims. Within the Muslim ummah it is a matter of high priority. Therefore, mutual collaboration and cooperation is always a desired action. But no cooperation is expected in matters that lead to immorality, sin, rebellion or disobedience to *shari'ah*. In brief it can be said that while *tawhīd* is the prime value it leads to no less an important rubric of values organically inter-related. Consequently, this ethical synergy provides motivating force in the life of individual and community.

Īmān (Faith)

Īmān or faith in Islam is often wrongly compared with blind following of a creed as it exists in some known world religions. Faith in the Qur'ān is a knowledge-based experience of Truth. *Īmān* or faith means achieving rationally certitude about the Transcendence, Authority and Power of Allah *s.w.t*. It calls for critical thinking and understanding of the universe we live in and the destiny and role of human beings in this worldly life. It is not a matter of certain theological assumption but realization of conviction (*'aqīdah*) in practice. The Qur'ān invariably talks about certain key indicators of belief, as desired actions, for example observance of *salāh* (five time daily prayers) on fixed timings and

³⁰ Al-Qur'an 5:2

payment of *zakāh* or fulfilment of covenants or feeding the hungry and helping the needy and the orphan and so on. Repeatedly mentioning of measurable actions along with the *'aqīdah*, indicates primacy of actions and integration of faith in social actions and practice. *Īmān* causes qualitative and behavioral changes in a believer. These changes are not mechanical but cognitive and behavioral. They are volitional. For example, the *Qur'ān* refers to believers (*mu'minūn*), as individuals in a community, who participate in establishment of *salāh*, not simply as a ritual but with understanding of what they are reciting, consequently they act with humbleness. They further manifest their *īmān* by avoiding unnecessary conversation, they make regular payment of *zakāh* or dues, guard their modesty, live family life in the prescribed manner, never transgress, fulfill their covenants and trusts, consequently, become from those who inherit authority in this world and recognition in the paradise as their permanent abode.³¹ Here *īmān* as a value has been associated with a series of actions leading to the ultimate success in this world and in the life hereafter.

Īmān or conviction in the Qur'ānic context is visualized as motivating force for exploring new frontiers of knowledge, scientific inventions, and human development. "This is a plain narrative for mankind, a guidance (*hidāyah*), and instruction (*mu'izah*) for those who observe *taqwa* (ethical conduct); so do not feel weak nor sad, and you will be elevated if you are indeed (true) believers."³²

³¹ "The believers have indeed attained true success; those who in their prayers humble themselves, who avoid whatever is vain and frivolous, who observe *zakah*, who strictly guard their private parts, save for their wives or those who their right hands possess, for with regard to them they are free from blame. As for those who seek beyond that, they are transgressors – who are true to their trusts and their covenants, and who guard their prayers, such are the inheritors, that shall inherit paradise in it they shall abide forever". Al-Qur'an 23:1-11.

³² Al-Qur'an 3:138-139

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This promise of Allah *s.w.t*, to allow believers high station is linked with their *īmān* coupled with optimism, confidence in Allah and their sincere striving in presenting Islam through their example as viable solution to human problems.

Īmān and *mu'min*, both are qualitative categories. The *Qur'ān* refers to achieving state of *īmān* as a "trade" that takes place between believers and Allah *subḥānahu wata'āla*. Believers offer their lives and properties in trade, while they get in return a praiseworthy place in *jannah* (paradise). They fight in the way of Allah to remove injustice, exploitation, and oppression from society. Their behavior manifests an attitude of sacrifice, submission, repentance, servitude, and bowing down to their Lord and Creator. They stand for truth, fight against evil, and watch with devotion the boundaries and limits ordained by Allah *subḥānahu wata'āla*. This behavior pattern is supposed to be a natural consequence of internalization of the value of *īmān*.³³

Īmān as a value persuades a believer not to remain a silent observer in situations when one finds fellow believers disputing and fighting among themselves. The reason is obvious; *īmān* is not just confession of faith it is a dynamic motivating force. Whenever a dispute arises between Muslims it is a collective obligation to make reconciliation and peace between the believers. *Taqwa*, and *īmān*, in the final analysis become distinct behavioral qualities of an Islamic personality.³⁴

³³ "Surely Allah has purchased of the believers their lives and their belongings and in return has provided that they shall have paradise. They fight in the way of Allah and slay and are slain. Such is the promise He has made incumbent upon Himself in the Torah and the Gospel, and the Qur'an". Al-Qur'an 9:111

³⁴ "If two parties of the believers happen to fight, make peace between them. But, then, if one of them transgresses against the other, fight the one that transgresses until it reverts to Allah's command. And if it does revert, make peace between them with justice, and be equitable for Allah loves the equitable. Surely, the believers are non but brothers unto one another, so set

Īmān as a value manifests itself in development of a relationship of mutual trust and respect. It liberates an individual from self-centered egoistic and self-righteous approach. It stops and discourages a person from involvement in deriding, belittling, defaming, nick naming, and backbiting and persuades the believer to stand for truth, justice, fairness and peace and brotherhood.³⁵

This transformatory role of *īmān* is emphasized and re-emphasized throughout the *Qur'ān*. It appears that in the values brought forth by the *Qur'ān* applied aspects of *īmān* enjoy centrality. The applied aspects of *īmān* help in transcending differentiations based on gender, color and race. Translation of faith into behavioral practice becomes the basis of ranking in the final judgment. Gender, race, ethnicity, color, political affiliations or financial status carries no importance whatsoever. It is one's ethical conduct which alone determines station of a person.

“Surely the men who submit (to Allah) and the woman who submit (to Allah), the men who have faith and the women who have faith, the men who are obedient and women who are obedient, the men who are truthful and the women who are truthful, the men who are steadfast and the women who are steadfast, the men who are humble and the women who are humble, , the men who give their dues and the women who give their dues, , the men who fast and the women who fast, the men who guard their chastity and women who guard their chastity, the men who remember Allah much and women who remember Allah much, for them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a mighty reward”.³⁶

things right between your brothers and have fear of Allah that you may be shown mercy”.

Al-Qur'an 49:9-10

³⁵ Al-Qur'an 49:11-12

³⁶ Al-Qur'an 33:35

***Dhikr* (Remembrance of Allah)**

Dhikr, remembrance of Allah, and reminding oneself about Him has been mentioned as one of the objectives of the mission of prophets of Allah *subḥānahu wata'āla*. Prophets have been called *mudhakirin* while their message or the content of their *da'wa* has been called *dhikr*. The Qur'ān calls itself *dhikra* and also refers to *dhikr* as a pre-requisite for *tazkiyah*, purification *falāh*, and *sa'adah*, i.e. success of the individual, as well as the community. The Qur'ān refers to *tazkiyah* and *dhikr* as interrelated activities. "Indeed, whosoever purifies shall prosper, remembering his Lord's Name and praying".³⁷

Dhikr here, is not confined to a dialectic of heart. It, rather, refers to consciousness and pious living through practice of *salāh* and good deeds. It synergizes cognitive and emotive conduct and behavior of a believer. It refers to a life which is free from injustice and wrongdoing. When properly comprehended, the value of *dhikr* persuade not only one individual but the whole community, to fulfil its covenants, contracts, commitments, and obligations.

Dhikr, as a universal value, motivates a believer to play a dynamic ethical and moral role in the society. It visualizes believers as a community to realize and establish the system of *salāh*, *zakāh* and enjoining virtue, *birr* and *ma'rūf*. The recurrence aspect of *dhikr* helps in creating perseverance (*istaqāmah*), and continuity in the struggle for establishment of truth and justice. It leads, ultimately to realization of Allah's Supremacy and Authority at personal, social, and global levels.

Internalization of *dhikr*, as value, creates a reciprocity which cannot be compared with any other kind of companionship. No human category of thought can adequately communicate the satisfaction, reliance, and fulfilment which flow

³⁷ Al-Qur'an 87:14-15

out of this reciprocity. It is a state of continuous perseverance, love and reliance on Allah.

"Therefore, remember Me. I will remember you. And be grateful to Me and never be ungrateful to Me (for My favours).³⁸

This state of complete reliance on Allah and satisfaction of heart (*ma'rifat-ullah*) creates an internal bliss and peace which dynamically leads to ethicalization of individual and society and gradual marginalization of evil and oppression. In other words, the satisfaction thus acquired, is not confined to psychological bliss which may create a feeling of void or of a spiritual gnosis, or ejaculation. It on the contrary creates a dynamic attitude involving the individual in social action. The *Qur'ān* refers to ways of recording servitude and gratefulness to be observed at a national level.

"And for every people we have laid down a ritual of sacrifice that they may pronounce the name of Allah over the cattle He has provided them; and your Lord is One Allah, therefore, surrender unto Him and give glad tidings to the humble; whose hearts are filled with fear when (name of) Allah is mentioned, who patiently bear whatever affliction come to them and who establish *salat* and who spend of that We have bestowed on them".³⁹

Dhikr thus motivates the community of believers to take active part in realization of social change, social change and social reconstruction. Attitude of *dhikr* in the *Qur'ān* is not a passive or introvert conduct. On the contrary Allah's *dhikr* with His beautiful names, *al-'Azīz*, *al-Wahhāb*, *al-Qawī*, *al-'Azīm*, *al-'Qaiyyum* and so on, persuade a believer to use best of the capacities to realize peace, justice, love, moderation, security and solidarity in society.

³⁸ Al-Qur'an 2:152

³⁹ Al-Qur'an 22:34-35

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Dhikr, remembrance, and glorification of the Lord of the universe, is considered by the Qur'ān a natural right of all human beings. Obstruction or denial of remembrance of Allah, by curbing religious freedom and through cultural invasions has been called by the *Qur'ān* a grave *zulm* (oppression, injustice and deprivation) “Who is more unjust and iniquitous than those who forbid that Allah’s name be glorified and mentioned much in Allah’s mosques, and try to ruin them”.⁴⁰

It is important to note that *dhikr* as a value persuades a believer to free oneself from excessive love for wealth and family and persuades a community to do *infāq* (spend in the way of Allah). This shows that spending in the way of Allah, *infāq*, is one way of doing *dhikr*, while *dhikr* has been normally understood in the world religions as withdrawal from dealing with material transactions. The Qur'ān, on the other hand, introduce a new dimension of *dhikr* by saying that involvement in trade and industry should not stop one from *dhikr* of Allah *subhānahu wata'āla*.

It is this new dimension which makes *dhikr* a matter of recharging the batteries of *īmān* by leaving all monitory transactions when the call for *dhikr* is made. But as soon as the rejuvenation of *īmān* and reorientation of priorities has taken place in the form of congregational prayers (*salāh al-jumu'ah*), a person returns back to extensive worldly activity, while increasing in remembrance of Allah’s *dhikr* perhaps more than what was done in the Masjid. This attitude guarantees eternal success. This confirms progress and development. The *Qur'ān* in its own unique way elaborates this aspect of *dhikr*

“Oh you who believe when the call is heard for the prayers of the day of Jumu'ah hasten unto remembrance (*dhikr*) of Allah and leave your trading, that is

⁴⁰ Al-Qur'an 2:114

better for you if you did but know, and when the prayer is over then disperse in the land and seek of Allah's bounty, and remember (*dhikr*) much, that you may be successful".⁴¹

A little concentration on the meaning and message given in these *ayāt* liberates us from the popular understanding of *dhikr* and gaining spirituality at the cost of detaching from materiality. *Dhikr* in the *Qur'ān* combines activities which have been categorized as worldly or spiritual. Thus, bringing unity and uniformity in human action and a meaningful balance in human behavior. *Dhikr* thus leads to progress, development, and prosperity. It is not anti-social, and anti-culture. It, on the other hand, provides an ethical and meaningful foundation for human culture and society.

Dhikr does fine tuning of the heart and what we call emotional intelligence. Usually a dichotomy is created between cognitive mind and emotions emerging from heart. *Dhikr* bring both cognitive and emotional processes under one primary concern of remembering Allah's Magnanimity, Bliss, Love as well as Authority. Human action and decision making thus is not controlled by neocortex or by amygdala alone. Human judgment is guided by what I call else where, *ethical intelligence*.

This state of mind and heart is expressed in the *Qur'ān* in one single word "*nafs al-mutma'innah*, the fully satisfied, serene, tranquil, pleasing and comforting state of mind, heart and body, a synergy which Allah's *dhikr* alone can create in the person of a believer.

Sabr (perseverance)

Involvement in remembrance (*dhikr*) of Allah *subhānahu wata'āla* as a value guides to understanding of another value namely *sabr* or persistence and

⁴¹ Al-Qur'an 62:9-10

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sustained and continued action. With reference to *dhikr* the *Qur'ān* repeatedly talks about doing it irrespective of time and space, whether morning or evening day or night:

Those who remember Allah, standing, sitting and lying down on their sides, and ponder deeply on the creation of the heavens and the earth (say): Our Lord You have not created all that in vain, glory to You, You are above all that they associate with You, save us from the torment of the Fire.⁴²

This value of doing *dhikr* persistently becomes more obvious when the *Qur'ān* focuses on *sabr* as a continuous practice. The *Qur'ān* links *sabr* and steadfastness as twin and related together, “O! my dear son establishes *salāh* and enjoin *ma'rūf* and forbid *munkar* and persevere (*wasbir*) whatever affliction befalls you. Surely these have been emphatically enjoined”.⁴³

Sabr and *'amal* (action) have been often interconnected in the *Qur'ān*, while common understanding of *sabr* is holding back, resignation, forbearance, withdrawal, and submission or tolerating of a situation. The *Qur'ān* assigns high ethical value to attitude of *sabr* or perseverance. It is a positive behavior trait in facing odds and pursuing courageously and vigorously the path of righteousness without a failure.

“Except those who persevere and act righteously such shall have Allah’s forgiveness and a great reward”.⁴⁴

Sabr is not confined to good deeds only. It also stands for fulfilment of obligations in most appropriate manner. In places it has been used for regular observing of devotions and rituals such as *salāh* and in the form of praising Allah,

⁴² Al-Qur'an 3:191

⁴³ Al-Qur'an 31:17

⁴⁴ Al-Qur'an 11:11

“So, bear patiently what they say and glorify, the praises of your Lord before the rising of the sun and at the going down thereof. And glorify Him during hours of the night and at the two ends of the day that you may find pleasure”.⁴⁵

Sabr as a value has an internal relationship with piety (*taqwa*) and success (*falāḥ*): “Believers be steadfast (*usberu*), and vie in steadfastness (*sabiru*), stay consolidated have Allah’s *taqwa* that you may attain true success”.⁴⁶

Sabr, in the *Qur’ān* is a pre-condition for proper dissemination of the Islamic *da’wah*. Islamic *da’wah* has to be done with wisdom, persistence, perseverance, constancy, and courage. In its dynamic understanding, *sabr* does not refer to a state of incapacitation, surrender, submission, or withdrawal, but in the sense of continuous struggle, unfailing effort in dissemination of Truth. “Indeed man is in loss except who believe and do righteous deeds and advise each other on Truth and Patience”.⁴⁷

This dynamic aspect of *sabr* is further elaborated by the *Qur’ān* at other places. It is also interesting to note that the *Qur’ān* sometimes interchanges the term *mujāhidīn* with *sābirīn*. Referring to the conflict between early Muslim community and the *mushrikīn* the *Qur’ān* mentions: “O prophet exort the believers to fight if there be of you 20 *sābirūn* (steadfast) they shall overcome 200 and if there be of you a hundred *sābirūn* they shall overcome a thousand of those who disbelieve because they are a folk without intelligence”.⁴⁸

In the next *ayah*, the *Qur’ān* continues:

⁴⁵ Al-Qur’an 20:130

⁴⁶ Al-Qur’an 3:200

⁴⁷ Al-Qur’an 103:1-3

⁴⁸ Al-Qur’an 8:65

Now Allah has lightened your burden for He knows that there is weakness in you. So, if there be of you a hundred *sābirūn* they shall overcome 200 and if there be of you a thousand (steadfast) they shall overcome two thousand by His permission. Allah is with the *sābirīn* (steadfast).⁴⁹

The dynamism of value of *sabr* is fully reflected in these two *āyāt*. In the normal understanding a person who is *sābir*, patient, is understood to contain himself and hold himself from responding. While these *āyāt* by calling *mujahidīn* as *sabirīn* refer to the dynamic aspect of striving and facing a challenge with strength, confidence, and steadfastness or *sabr*.

Three important messages are conveyed in these *āyāt*. First, qualitatively due to *Iman* a true believer carries more confidence and trust in Allah than a non-believer. Second, *sabr* means striving, fighting and being firm against oppression and evil actions. Third, even when having a low level of *īmān* a believer shall overcome twice the number of unbelievers. It is not the number or quantity that matters, it is the strength of faith and reliance on Allah that helps overcoming a rather large number of opponents.

Jihād (striving in the path of Allah)

The root word *jahada* simply means to struggle, to strive to do one's utmost effort. This is why its other derivative *ijtihād* means to exert one's best in searching a solution. Similarly, *mujāhidah* is generally understood as spiritual *jihad* against *nafs ammārah* in order to train oneself to be content in doing what pleases Allah *s.w.t.* But *jihād* has a wider scope. A person makes *jihad* when in a cold night one hears *azan* for *fajr* and wants to stay a bit longer in the cozy bed, but the inner self (*nafs mutma'inah*) demands leaving bed and rushing towards *masjid* to perform *salāh* with *jamā'at*.

⁴⁹ Al-Qur'an 8:66

In a society where human rights are violated, corruption and inequity is common, it is *jihād* to raise voice against forces of oppression and exploitation. All these forms of *jihād*, if done with sincerity are going to be rewarded by the All Knowing and All Powerful. However, the greatest form of *jihād* in the Qur’ān remains offering one’s resources and one’s own self in order to remove oppression, violation of human rights and denial of religious freedom to a people. “Permission (to fight) has been granted to those for they have been wronged. Verily Allah has the power to help them, those who are unjustly expelled from their homes for no other reason than their saying: “Allah is our Lord. If Allah were not to repel some through others, *monasteries*, and *churches* and *synagogues* and *mosques* wherein the name of Allah is much mentioned would certainly have been pulled down. Allah will most certainly help those who will help Him”.⁵⁰

In these *āyat* the *Qur’ān* refers to the purpose of *jihad* namely, to protect human rights of the people. It also indicates that *jihad* is not for conversion by force but protection of right to worship of people of *various religious affiliations*. We are not aware of any other religious Scripture which makes it an obligation on its followers to protect places of worship of people of other faith. This *Qur’ānic* dimension of *jihād* is mostly missing from scholarly writings on Islam.

A common misconception about *jihad* is that self-purification (*tazkiyah* of *nafs*) through spiritual and mystical practices is perhaps a greater *jihād* than fighting for the cause of human rights of the oppressed. The *Qur’ān* pre-empts this mind set and clearly mentions: “Do you count the slaking of a pilgrim’s thirst and attending of the inviolable place of worship (*Ka’ba*) as (equal to the worth of him), who believes in Allah and the last day and struggles (*wa jāhada*) in the way of Allah. **They are not equal in the sight of Allah.** Allah guides not wrongdoing

⁵⁰ Al-Qur’an 22:39-40

folk. Those who believe and have left their homes and struggle (*wa jāhadū*) with their wealth and their lives, in Allah's way, **are of much greater station in Allah's sight**. These are they who are triumphant".⁵¹

Those who participate in the struggle have been guaranteed blessing, mercy, forgiveness, and success. The value of *jihād*, it is obvious, has much wider scope in the Qur'ān. It includes *ibadat*, devotion, *infaq*, monetary and non-material sacrifices as well as *hijrah* which is a form of *jihād*.⁵² It is interesting to note the interface of these values in several places in the Qur'ān where struggling and striving in the way of Allah, leads to discovering right path. "As for those who strive (*jāhadū*) in Our cause We shall surely guide them to Our ways".⁵³

The value of *jihād* persuades an individual to think beyond the available solutions. The search for most appropriate solutions within the confines of *shari'ah* is the actual task of a *mujtahid*. The individual feels obliged to make use of all available resources in order to achieve the goal. "Go forth light armed, and heavy armed, and strive (*wa jāhidū*) with your wealth, and your lives in the way of Allah that is best for you, if you but knew".⁵⁴ It is this comprehensiveness of *jihād* which guarantees success in this world and life hereafter.

It is rather unfortunate that even some apologetic Muslims insist to interpret *jihād* in terms of pacifist spirituality (*sufi mujahidah*) and assign such *mujahidah* more value than struggle for removal of injustice and oppression from society. Apparently their view is not endorsed by the Qur'ān when it declares in clear unequivocal terms "*a'zamu darajah*" to the *jihad fi sabi lillah*.

⁵¹ Al-Qur'an 9:19-20

⁵² "Those who believed and forsook their wealth and homes and strove in the way of Allah such may rightly hope for the mercy of Allah, for Allah is All forgiving, All Merciful". Al-Qur'an 2:218

⁵³ Al-Qur'an 29:69

⁵⁴ Al-Qur'an 9:41

At the same time *jihād* is not to be confused with its Islamophobic interpretation terrorism and use of force for conversion because the Qur’ān explicitly prohibits violation of one single human life unjustly. The topic requires a rather detailed discussion, presently sufficient to say *jihād* is a corrective action to bring peace, order, justice and security in human society. It is not bloodshed in the name of religion, nor a so called “holy war”, which is essentially a Christian concept introduced in the Crusades against the Muslim and the Jews.

Falāh is another important value and an outcome of *jihād*, and at the same time an agent for bringing benefits and blessings to humanity.

“Oh you who believe be mindful of your duty to Allah, and seek the way of approach to Him, and struggle (*wa jāhidū*) in His way in order that you may succeed”.⁵⁵

Falāh(Wellbeing in this World and the Hereafter)

Falāh in the Qur’ān is another comprehensive value which refers, not only to success in life hereafter and prosperity but also persuades to doing social good. Thus combining what is known as worship with what is known as worldly gain.⁵⁶ *Falāh* is a result of several other factors including enjoining virtue with wisdom, *da‘wah* with *hikmah*, in an organized manner. A natural consequence of value of *sabr* is inviting towards good, enjoining *ma'rūf*, and abstaining from indecency, to be observed persistently, while at the same time, doing good deeds, maintaining social justice, propagating *birr* or involving oneself in social *jihād*. It is in this sense that *falāh* is also a natural consequence of *sabr*,

“Seek help with patience and *salat* truly Allah is with *sabirin*”.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Al-Qur’an 5: 35

⁵⁶ Al-Qur’an 22:77

⁵⁷ Al-Qur’ān 2:153

The call for *falāh* which rises from every minirate of a large or a small *masjid*, all over the globe, is a call not only for glorifying and declaring Allah *subḥānahu wata'āla* as the Ultimate Authority. It is a call for action, involvement, social change, and reform. It is a call to create environment of love, compassion, forgiveness, peace, and justice.

Iqamat al Din (realization of Din)

All Islamic values converge on one single concept, namely establishment of Allah's *din* in individual, social and collective life. *Din* does not recognize separation or division between what is called worldly or secular and what is assumed to be religious or holy. When the Qur'ān calls Islam as *dīn* Allah s.w.t has chosen for the Muslims, it does not use it in the sense of formal religion but total way of life. The word *dīn* is used in the Qur'ān variously. It refers to the Day of Judgment, also for implementation of Allah's *hudūd* or commands, as well as for realization of Allah's supremacy and sovereignty in the political, social, and economic realms. (Yousuf 12: 40). All major and subsidiary values help in realization of a system, a way of life, in which all human endeavours and efforts lead to actualization of an order wherein Allah's commands alone prevail.

Iqāmah of *din* does not mean imposition of only legal and penal aspects of *dīn* as commonly understand in the West. The islamophobics have globally spread the idea of Islamic state as a tyrannical rule of Muslim clergy known as *Taliban*. This Hollywood version of Islam has no basis in the Qur'an and the *sunnah*. Islam does not allow theocratic rule of clergy. The fact of the matter is honoring the human rights of people, protection and promotion of life, honour property, religion and cultural rights and protection of progeny are the primary objectives of Islamic *shari'ah*, punishments are only a minor part of the system. The above

primary and secondary values help in building a fair, balanced, and just holistic social, economic, and political order.

Conclusion

In summation it can be said that the primary value of *tawhīd* strengthened and flanked by other equally relevant values such as, *taqwa*, *īmān*, *dhikr*, *'adl*, *birr*, *jihād*, *sabr*, *falāh*, and *istiqāmah* provides an axiological basis for an ethics centered human behavior and attitude. When these values are internalized into human behavior the personality of a human being, a Muslim, *mu'min*, *mujahid*, *muttaqi* and *'ālim* comes into existence. None of these values are abstract. All these values have applied dimensions. These values are universal and cannot be monopolized by the Muslims. Whoever practices these values, the *Qur'ān* educates us, can bring a remarkable revolution in human society. A transformation of personalities, a change in mind set, responses, and actions can lead to a civilizational re-orientation. These transformatory values have to be understood in their wider universal context and as organically linked with the central category of *tawhīd*.

Thus, the ideal of social change in the *Qur'ānic* perspective is essentially an axiological holistic reorientation of human conduct and behaviour. The above discussion can be further summarized in four points:

1. Islam as a major civilizing force, culture, and the way of life, provides a set of universal values for the individual as well as for the socio-economic and political life of man. These values given by the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah* make Islamic civilization and culture an ethical order which can bring a qualitative change in the life style of members of a society.

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2. The Islamic way of life revolves around the core values, principles, or norms of *tawhid* and *'adl* which also provide human beings guidance in their interpersonal, social, economic and political matters.
3. Iqāmah of *dīn* does not mean imposition of part or aspects of *dīn* as commonly understood. Islamic shari'ah upholds these values in all walks of life. *Iqamah* of *din* means realization of a fair, transparent, just social order and pluralistic society.
4. A proper understanding of these values and their applied and dynamic character leads to ethicalization of conduct and behavior. One major contribution of the *Qur'ān* to world culture and civilization is introduction of these dynamic values as foundations of a new paradigm of fair and ethics centered social order, *al-'adālah ijtimā'iyah*.

When properly grasped and followed these values have the potential to cause a change in the world view, and understanding of man, universe and its Creator as well as in the expected process of social change. Through these values, Islam provides a sustainable model of civilization and peaceful co-existence of human beings.

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