

## 4. Islam's Respect for the Individual and Society

The celestial organization first creates a number of elementary parts, each of which possesses certain qualities and then combines and mixes them in spite of all their differences, so that in addition to their individual and separate uses, new advantages are produced.

For example, a human being has various organs, limbs, and powers, each of which possesses different material and spiritual uses. They may be combined to produce a stronger and greater power like a weight which is composed of small parts, and has more power to move at a certain direction.

They may also refuse to combine, and preserve their separation and differences, like the ear and eye, hearing and sight, will power and motion, each of which has separate functions and may act separately, but the point is that as they are all united in composition, they are ruled over by a fresh unit called man, and this same domination over all the powers creates advantages which none of the parts possessed by themselves. These advantages are manifold, both material and spiritual.

One of the most important advantages is that in their unity lies a wonderful variety of uses and benefits. For when human substance, namely the embryo, completed its development and growth, it can detach a part of itself, and produce another perfect being who can perform all the mental and material functions which the original part was able to do. We, therefore, conclude that all human beings are human in spite of their variety. Man is one, and he is one kind. The actions of individuals are numerous, but they are similar in kind.

All these actions join together, producing a link and alliance. Water may be divided and poured into various vessels. In this way the number increases, but all are of one kind, and their property remains the same. If all the water gathers in one place, their power is greatly augmented.

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In educating human beings and guiding them towards true happiness, Islam has paid close attention to this truth, that man is a single unique being for whom laws have been enacted. Islam has never established laws for a single individual.

***“And for every nation there is a doom,” (Al-’Aaraaf, 7:34)***

***“Every community is called to account” (Al-Jaathiya, 45:28)***

***And if Allah had pleased, they would not have set up others (with Him) and We have not appointed you a keeper over them, and you are not placed in charge of them.***

***(Al-An’aam, 6: 107)***

***And if they had kept up the Taurat and the Injeel and that which was revealed to them from their Lord, they would certainly have eaten from above them and from beneath their feet there is a party of them keeping to the moderate course, and (as for) most of them, evil is that which they do (Al-Maaida, 5:66)***

***Indeed there was a sign for you in the two hosts (which) met together in encounter; one party fighting in the way of Allah and the other unbelieving, whom they saw twice as many as themselves with the sight of the eye and Allah strengthens with His aid whom He pleases; most surely there is a lesson in this for those who have sight. (Aal-’Imraan, 3: 13)***

***And every nation had a messenger; so when their messenger came, the matter was decided between them with justice and they shall not be dealt with unjustly. (Yunus, 10:47)***

***The people of Nuh and the parties after them rejected (prophets) before them, and every nation purposed against their messenger to destroy him, and they disputed by means of the falsehood that they might thereby render null the truth, therefore I destroyed them; how was then My retribution! (Ghafer, 40: 5)***

This true relation that exists between an individual and society, produces a different “individual in society”. Of course to the extent that individuals assist the existence of such a society with all their powers and qualities, similar powers and qualities are produced in that society.

You see therefore that the Qur’an believes in death, in the Holy Book, in intelligence, understanding, action, devotion, and sin for "people".

***Say: Allah has spoken the truth, therefore follow the religion of Ibrahim, the upright one; and he was not one of the polytheists. (Aal-’Imraan, 3:95)***

***And He it is Who has created man from the water, then He has made for him blood relationship and marriage relationship, and your Lord is powerful. (Al-Furqaan, 25:54)***

***O you men! surely We have created you of a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you may know each other; surely the most honorable of you with Allah is the one among you most careful (of his duty); surely Allah is Knowing, Aware.***

***(Al-’Hujaraat, 49: 13)***

We realize thus, that as the Qur’an has paid attention to the accounts of individuals, it has given greater attention to the history of nations.

This special attention of the Qur’an took place at a time when history contained nothing but the accounts of kings and famous men, and historians had no interest in the history of nations and communities.

There were however a few historians like Masoudi and Ibn-e-khaldoun, after the descent of the Qur'an, who devoted themselves to some extent to this topic, until recent changes appeared in the context of history, and it was transformed from being a biography of individuals, to a description of nations.

It is claimed that the first person who adopted the descriptive method was the French historian, Auguste Comte, who died in 1858 A.D.

Briefly, as it was stated, the requisite for the true relation between the individual and society is that a number of strong social forces and qualities should be created to super-impose individual powers whenever opposition and contradiction appears in society.

Moreover, our senses and experiences confirm our statement concerning those forces and qualities which produce action and reaction, that is those forces which influence other forces and qualities which are in their turn affected.

It must be said that the wills of individuals in matters relating to social riots or rebellions, and for that matter in any other happenings, cannot oppose or resist the endeavor and will of society. A part has no alternative but to obey the whole, and to follow the way of the whole. The power of society is measured by the amount of the intelligence and ideas that it absorbs from its members.

This is also true in the case of general panic, caused by defeat, insecurity, earthquake, famine and cholera, or even in ordinary national customs and traditions and such like, whose influence is less than defeat and similar other matters. Society absorbs the power of thought and understanding from individuals, but it compels them to obey society.

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Islam has endeavored to raise the dignity of society to such an extent that no such parallel can be found for it in any other religions or in the laws of civilized nations. The evidence for this endeavor is that which we have already explained. For the training of individual morals and instincts, which are the roots of the creation of society, in spite of the power ethics and instincts engendered in society which dominate individual morals, has little chance of success.

For this reason Islam has based on a social foundation all the most significant of its injunctions and divine decrees, such as pilgrimage, prayer, Jihad (struggle in the interest of Islam), almsgiving and in brief, all religious requirements.

Islam has adopted true happiness, proximity to God and winning esteem at God's threshold as the goals of the Islamic society, and even of every other society which cannot naturally do without a common objective and goal, In society this goal is a strict internal watch (a sort of secret police) from which no human mind and nature remains hidden.

This goal is the surety for the preservation of the above decrees.

Of course, to the above internal force must be added the forces of the Islamic government which protect public mores and religious limits, as well as the general ordinances of the "call for charity", "directing to the good" and "forbidding wrong".

Thus it will be seen that society does not only possess an apparent protector, but also a secret internal guard, and even if some social deviations are overlooked by the leaders of society and those responsible for the execution of public ordinances, nothing remains hidden from the watchful eye of the conscience.

That is why we claimed that the way followed by Islam and its efforts in social matters are superior to all the other ways and methods, for Islam has chosen the internal watch or secret police as the most effective way, unrivalled in other laws.

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