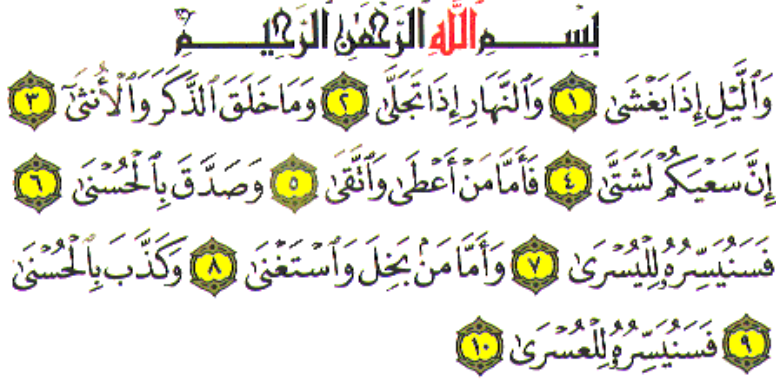


# LIVING AS BRITISH MUSLIMS

## Embracing Differences and Promoting Tolerance



By the night when it covers everything and by the day when it brightens up in glory.

And by Him, who created the male and the female, surely your efforts are diverse.

So, he who gives and is pious and accepts what is good, We shall prepare for him the way to ease;

But whoever is miserly and heedless and rejects what is good, We shall prepare for him the way to hardship"

[Surah Al-Lail (92), Ayahs 1-10]

Our wonderful world is full of contrast; the darkness of the night and the brightness of the day, the competitive urge of men and the loving motherly instinct of women. Then there is the variety in human endeavours. People are different from one another, they differ in their works, and all have their specific goals. This richness of diversity in human beings is the proof of Divine Unity and the brotherhood of man. After introducing the concept of diversity in the creation and mankind the Quran explains the path to success and the path to failure by mentioning the three - characteristics of successful people. These are:

### Generosity:

This is to give to others without them asking for it, to provide support, service and provisions to the needy. The generous give these out of love and kindness. Parents are generous to their children as they feed, clothe and care for them.

### God Consciousness (Taqwa):

This means to fear God and be aware of the Lord's presence all the time and in all places. This God consciousness is expressed through prayer charity and works of goodness.

### Openness:

Accepting all that is good and beautiful.

This means recognising the good ideas and concepts Good habits and practices etc.

By developing these characteristics of generosity, God consciousness and openness, British Muslims can play an important role in society.

These characteristics really broaden the outlook of a person. This makes it possible to accept different opinions and views. They encourage tolerance of people who are different. As we integrate into the wider society (speaking English, wearing suits and ties, eating fish and chips, supporting Manchester United) and begin to live like the British what will distinguish us from the rest? Taqwa - this will be the hallmark of a true British Muslim.

The result of this is "We shall prepare for him the way to ease." We will no longer remain aliens or foreigners here; we will be part of this society. However, this doesn't mean we will lose our unique distinctiveness and warning that if you do not accept good and become inclusive then "we shall prepare for you the way to hardship"

The Quran then turns to three characteristics which are opposite of these namely:

Miserliness opposite of generosity

Heedlessness opposite of Taqwa

Close mindedness opposite of openness

By comparing good characteristics with the evil ones it's emphasising the need for developing good traits.

Let's resolve to embrace the good in British Society: Civil rights, democracy and freedom, justice, hardworking, creativity and tolerance. Historically Muslims have always comfortably lived in multicultural societies, contributing to the society and benefiting it by displaying the beautiful moral and spiritual values of Islam.