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# The Ethos of the Quran *Surah* Al-Ashr in Building an Advanced Civilization

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#### **ABSTRACT**

**Keywords** advance civilication, surah al-Ashr, time

This study aims to analyze Surat Al-Ashr in the Qur'an and its role in building an advanced civilization. Surah Al-Ashr is one of the short surahs in the Quran that contains important messages about the importance of time, hard work, and kindness. The research method used is literature literature. The literature sources that researchers choose have a relationship with related topics of discussion. The data analysis technique uses the miles and Huberman model where researchers will collect data, then reduce the data and draw conclusions. The results of this study show that Surah Al-Ashr has a strong message about the importance of making good use of time. There are three aspects that make a civilization advanced, the first is faith and charity, the second is the use of time used optimally and the third is always the development of Science, Technology and Art. Researchers hope that the results of this study make an important contribution in understanding Surah Al-Ashr as a source of inspiration in building an advanced civilization. By understanding the messages in Surah Al-Ashr, one can learn valuable lessons about the importance of time, hard work, and kindness in achieving progress in various aspects of life.

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#### Introduction

An advanced Islamic society is a concept that has long been a dream for Muslims around the world. This concept describes a society that is able to achieve progress in various aspects of life, such as science, technology, economy, social, and culture. An advanced Islamic society is also expected to be able to overcome various challenges faced by Muslims, both at home and abroad. History records that Islamic society was once the center of world civilization in its heyday in the past. At that time, Muslims were able to achieve progress in various fields, such as mathematics, astronomy, medicine, and architecture. However, the progress then regressed and declined along with various historical events that occurred.

Today, the dream of creating an advanced Islamic society is again a hot topic. Many people

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are trying to realize this concept in various ways, such as through education, technology development, and economic strengthening. It is hoped that, with continuous efforts, the Islamic community can re-achieve its glory in the past and become an example for the world community in achieving progress and success. As Muslims who have the Qur'an as the main guideline, the Quran has answers to various problems of human life.

At the beginning of the opening of surah Al Ashr, Allah opens the surah with the word wa which is interpreted as an oath or we say in arabic *Qasam* (*aqsam*). In the Quran there are several verses that contain the meaning of aqsam. Linguistically, aqsam means oath, while according to the term aqsam can be interpreted as an expression used to give affirmation in the verse. One of the surahs that came down using the expression aqsam is surah al-asr. At the beginning of surah al-asr Allah affirms that there is no unlucky time or muju time, in fact all times are the same. What influences the good and bad of a person. Time is always neutral. Time should not be cursed, blamed, or named unlucky or lucky. Time is one of God's creations in which various events occur, both good and bad. The Qur'an reveals time has several functions: first as a tool to determine the time of worship, second as a medium for self-introspection, third as a plan for the future. God made time His vow to remember that time contains miracles in it. God also wants to remind us that living in this world through time, if we have passed that time then the time that we can use and can never be repeated (Rozi et al., 2023).

# Method

The method used in this study is a qualitative descriptive method. Descriptive research is research that aims to describe a related condition. When conducting research, researchers use the literature study method so that the source of this writing data is scientific books published with the intention to be used as a reference source. The data analysis techniques used by researchers in this study are data collection, data reduction, and data inference.

# **Result and Discussion**

In some verses of the Quran there are many mentions of oath or in Arabic commonly known as Qasam, this word is used to affirm the verse. Usually, verses containing the word Qasam begin with the word "wa", such as walfajr, wallaili, wan najmi idzaa hawa and so on. Based on al-Bayani's tafsir, the essence of qasam consists of two aspects, namely eptymologically and terminology. Epitymologically, qasam means an oath that is actually spoken, while according to terminology, qasam is one of the language styles in the Quran that explains the meaning of a verse by means of sensory reasoning, namely a distraction from something that can be felt. Allah says:

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(1) By time, (2) indeed men are indeed at a loss, (3) except those who believe and do righteous deeds and counsel one another for truth and patience. In some verses of the Quran there are many mentions of oath or in Arabic commonly known as Qasam, this word is used to affirm the verse. Usually, verses containing the word Qasam begin with the word "wa", such as walfajr, wallaili, wan najmi idzaa hawa and so on. Based on al-Bayani's tafsir, the essence of qasam consists of two aspects, namely eptymologically and terminology. Epitymologically, qasam means an oath that is actually spoken, while according to terminology, qasam is one of the language styles in the Quran that explains the meaning of a verse by means of sensory reasoning, namely a distraction from something that can be felt (Jailani & Hasbiyallah, 2019).

One of the surahs that has the word qasam in it is surah al-asr. A great scholar namely M Quraish Shihab interpreted the word al asr in this surah al asr as "time in general". This is because M Quraish Shihab quoted the opinion of Shaykh Muhammad Abduh where in ancient times the Arabs had the habit of swearing with time at the time of the descent of the Qur'an. When doing this habit, Arabs often say "bad time" when they fail or when they get good news they will say "good time". It is this custom that Allah denies through surah al asr, Allah opens this verse by swearing by time. In this surah Allah wants to affirm that there is neither bad time nor good time, all time is essentially the same. Because he is one of God's creations. Quraish Shihab reveals Allah swears by time using the word 'Asr to express for the time that man achieves results after he has squeezed his energy. But the results obtained by man will be at a loss with the results he achieves except those who believe and do shaleh charity. The losses that will be experienced by humans will not necessarily be accepted by humans when early but will be realized in the future. This is the basis why Allah chose the word asr to indicate time in general (Dozan, n.d.).

In addition to Quraish shihab, a scholar named Mutawalli al-Sha'rawi in his interpretation interprets al-'Aṣr in this verse in terms as a worship devoted to a time. The other meaning is worship that is required within a certain time, namely after zhuhur and before maghrib. And the broader meaning is that al-'Aṣr is not just a certain time between zhuhur and maghrib, but a time that includes the whole day or a time that covers the whole night". There is another meaning that means that al-'Aṣr is broader than above with the meaning of the time of day and night which includes the number of weeks, and the number of months. Which in it has its own character, such as the time of ignorance, the time of the arrival (glory) of Islam, the time of the Umayyads, the time of the Abbasids, and the period of progress that formed the modern age. Al-'Aṣr is judged according to its understanding of its meaning to be threefold, namely: The first meaning: worship. The second meaning: the time of worship. The third meaning: time that has its own character such as day and night, or time that has a special character, such as character in politics, or progress, or technology. (the heyday of Islam, the time of jahiliyah, etc.)".

After explaining the meaning of al-'Aṣr, al-Sha'rawi continued with the question, why does Allah swear by time using the word al-'Aṣr? He further replied that, Allah Almighty, swears by time using the word al-'Aṣr because at the time of Asr comes at the end of the day in which man is busy with his workers, and sometimes man is negligent at that time and also when Asr is the time when man reaps the fruits of his work, is that time used on something useful? Or is that time spent on goodness? Or is it just a waste of time? Allah swears by using day and night because day is the time when man carries out his activities, then at the end of the time at the end of his activities man will reap the rewards of his work that he has passed (Dozan, n.d.). Allah (swt) swears by using the age in which it contains its own character because every time has its beginning and. There is an end, just as civilization has been established, so neither its people nor its governments have progressed. However, all of that will have an end. Therefore, al-Sha'rawi did not specify the meaning of al-'Aṣr specifically in the above verse, but he did do in general. As Allah does not determine (hide) the time of lailatul Qadr on odd nights at the end of Ramadan (the 20th and back), so that people are earnest and guard every time of the night. So is the time of istijābah (the fulfillment of prayers) on Friday, so that people. Be earnest in keeping all time on Fridays by worshiping

Based on the analais study of the two mufassir, the researcher concluded: First. In the view of Quraish Shihab, the word al-'Aṣr in this surah has a general meaning of time. Therefore, Allah vows to use the word al-'Aṣr to state that it is for the time that man achieves results after he has squeezed his energy. Here he suggests that, man will lose if he cannot use his time well, Quraish Shihab continues whatever results are achieved by man, everything is in one container of totality of loss. Except those who carry out four main activities, namely, people who believe, do righteous deeds, testify to each other about the truth, and testify to each other about patience. While Mutawalli al-Sha'rawi divides the meaning of al-'Aṣr into three meanings: First. Second.Time of worship (i.e. asar prayer), and the Third.Time that has its own character such as day and night which has a special character, such as character in politics or technology (Angraeni et al., 2023).

#### 1. Surah al-Ashr

Imam Shafii once said that if Allah did not send down verses or surahs from the Quran, then it is enough to send down the Quran surah al-asr only. The content of surah al asr is very dense, the content of this surah covers the historical life of human civilization. If viewed from a theological point of view, surah al asr brings the direction of human life both world life and hereafter life that is progressing and high end of high civilization (Kahfi, 2020). Allah mentions the position of man in surah al-asr consists of four elements namely faith, charity shaleh, tausiah truth and tausiah patience. These four elements must exist in a human being so as not to be classified as a losing human being (Zakiyuddin Baidhawy, 2017). If examined more deeply, most verses from surah al asr are plural which have to do with improving the quality of life of individuals and communities.

The words in question are insan, khusrin, aamanu, 'aamilu, and tawashau, these words indicate the quality of human life is collective.

Briefly researchers concluded that studying surah al asr, can not be separated from the word time that continues to run until now. The division of time (time) according to its place has only three types, the first past, present, and future. To build an advanced civilization the most suitable place to discuss is only the future, because the past is a time that has passed one can never go back to the past even if only one second ago. Building an advanced civilization is not easy, it takes a long process and stages to make it happen. If we look at the nineties we will find objects that we may not find again today, the comparison of the nineties with the present era is not at all the changes that have occurred in this twenty-year period. Changes in various aspects that have occurred certainly cannot necessarily be done instantly by humans, it takes a long process and stages to make it happen. This also applies to every human being, every human being wants a better change in his life, be it in career, position, possessions or others. Quran surah al asr is here to teach a lesson to humans if they want a good change in the future, then a person must start changing the order of behavior in his life for the better at that time (Zakiyuddin Baidhawy, 2017).

#### 2. The Interpretation Surah al-Ashr

In Tafsir al Misbah written by M. Quraish Shihab states that the concept of time according to him is the main capital of man, if time is not used with useful things, then the totality of humans becomes a loss. However, harm does not apply to the four groups of people who believe, do good deeds, testify to each other the truth and testify to each other for patience. In this interpretation Allah (swt) pays attention to the time of those who do not want to take advantage of the time that has been given by Allah then he is really a group of losers. There is a hadith narrated by ibn Abbas (ra) narrated by Imam Tirmidhi which means: "there are two pleasures that are mostly in human content, namely health and recreation".

From the explanation and hadith above, researchers conclude that time will never stop, time will continue to run, never time Back to the past and we as Muslims must realize the importance of using the time that Allah has given us. If we return to the title above, then to become an advanced civilization, every one of us must start a step of change from now on. The so-called advanced civilization is not easy to achieve, it takes a long time and development to achieve it, so wouldn't it be better if every Muslim develops (changes himself) for the better? The aspects developed are not only limited to science, technology and art alone, but can be started by changing oneself into a mu'min in accordance with what is in the Quran and Sunnah (Hanum, 2023).

#### 3. Civilization Advances

According to Al-Buthi, a good civilization is a civilization that is able to provide happiness and well-being for humans. On the contrary, a bad civilization is one that gives unhappiness and

suffering to people. This means that technological and scientific progress is not the only measure of civilizational progress, but must also be seen in terms of its positive impact on human well-being as a whole. Al-Buthi also argued that civilization is inseparable from moral and ethical values, as well as religion and beliefs. According to him, a healthy and harmonious civilization should be based on strong moral principles and positive religious values. Thus, Al-Buthi put forward the idea that a quality civilization should be based on good moral and ethical principles, as well as positive religious values. In his view, civilization is not only about material and technological progress alone, but also about human happiness and well-being. Therefore, a good civilization must be able to balance technological and scientific progress with overall human well-being. Al-Buthi proposed the idea that civilization should be able to provide positive benefits for humans, such as ease and comfort in activities, improved quality of life, and happiness in life (Hanum, 2023).

Ibn Khaldun explains that man will not be able to live alone, he will need others and he will progress in a more rational direction. The development of human civilization basically moves from 'Umran badawi (bedouin culture) to 'Umran hadhari (civic culture) naturally, because humans have a life orientation. This human orientation is based on two, namely permana. Fikr (Intellectuality), the aspect that causes humans to be different from animals. And second. Al-hayawaniyyah wa alghidza'iyyah (animal and nutritive aspects). In his work Ibn Khaldun wrote the development of man into two: first, Tatamaddan Al-Madinah: Societies that have not yet reached maturity, tend to concentrate on efforts to meet the needs, namely working on basic food, the second Society lives, developed cities, a number of fields of work begin to emerge so they will take advantage of the wealth that exists at this time this is what ibn Khaldun called a modern community (Theguh Saumantri & Abdillah, 2020).

The history of Islamic civilization is one of the branches of Islamic dirasah science that is always interesting to study. It cannot be denied that evidence of Islamic civilization is not only found in history books, but also in the form of physical forms in the form of buildings, constitutional systems, or in the form of values, principles and concepts. Today some of the foundations of science that we enjoy today are contributions of Islamic civilization to the world, this shows that Islam is not just a religion but the presence of Islam is a religion of civilization.

Linguistically civilization comes from the Arabic word "Adab", the meaning of this civilization is the perfect and complete goodness, both spiritual and material aspects. In Islam itself the Arabs call civilization with the term tamaddun, the word tamaddun comes from the word daya-na which means debt. The founder of the Institute for the Study of Islamic Thought and Civilization, Dr. Hamid Fahmy, explained that the concept of tammaddun cannot be separated from religion (ad-din), the words tamaddun and ad-Din (religion) come from the same root, therefore he interpreted civilization as born from Islam and is a consequence of man's debt to Allah who has

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given all blessings to man (Muchtar, 2017). Civilization is the highest phase of a life process of human history. This event is marked by the life of people who cooperate with each other in terms of goodness, not forgetting also the life of high scientific knowledge, and the realization of the goal of the benefit of the people in all sides of life that continues to progress and develop. In another sense, civilization is the highest peak in science, art, and culture, which makes this science high society has moral civility in all aspects of life (Usman et al., 2021).

Talking about the words "Progress", "Forward", "Forward" and similar words certainly cannot be separated from an Islamic organization that often uses this word in its da'wah movement. Muhammadiyah is an Islamic community organization founded by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan in 1912 in Kauman Village, Yogyakarta City. Muhammdiyah officially promoted the concept of Progressive Islam in 2010 in his hometown (Qodir, 2019) The word "Progress" is a word "Forward" that gets the affix "Ber" at the beginning, and "an" at the end. According to the Big Dictionary Indonesian the word Forward is defined as moving forward and getting better. so that researchers conclude that Progress is one of the concepts to move forward for the better. From the two explanations above, researchers conclude that Progressive civilization is a condition where Islam and Science are applied to people's lives and make it the main reference to continue to move forward for the better. Realizing an advanced civilization is certainly not something easy, but in Islam Allah Almighty has conveyed how humans can realize an advanced civilization in surah al Asr. There are several points that researchers conclude after reading several literature studies, to realize an advanced Islamic civilization (Zakiyudin Baidhdawi & Azaki Khoiruddin, n.d.).

#### 4. Faith

Faith is fundamental in building a civilization. According to Ismail Raji Al-Faquqi, Tawhid is the essence of Islamic civilization. Tawhid as the first principle that determines the elements of culture and civilization. In the third verse of surah al-Asr, Allah (swt) excludes the class of people who lose money and the first mentioned in that verse are those who believe. Faith makes it pure tawhid to become a progressive civilization, if a Muslim who has good faith then from that faith will be born good behavior (amal shaleh) in his life. In the Quran surah Al-Ashr there are two personality values, the first is about discipline, being punctual, and always filling time with good deeds (Zakiyuddin Baidhawy, 2017) When the researcher looked deeper into this *surah* he found that the verses in surah al-Ashr are plural, indicating the quality of human life as a collectiveity. Towards the main civilization it is not easy to realize it, but researchers hope that the results of this research can have an impact on all people to start building an advanced civilization (Ismail Raji Al Faruqi, 1982).

Faith according to Kiai Dahlan refers to the Qur'an, "washaddaqa bil husna", meaning one who truly believes in the difference between virtue and inevitability, and believes that himself, the

universe, all exists to create and maintain. Of course, believing in God will reward those who work righteously and will torture those who do evil. This belief is truly penetrating, entrenched, and imprinted in the heart to the extent that it overwhelms the will of their heart. Then that faith has an impact on charity (Azaki Khoiruddin, 2015).

#### 5. Time

Time, linguistically the word time is the result of a translation of al-waqtu which consists of three letters namely wa, qaf, and ta. The meaning of al-waqtu and time is the same, namely time. While in terms of time is a measure of time or a measure of epoch. According to the Great Dictionary, Indonesian time is a collection of networks when a process, action or situation is ongoing and no one can know about the future. In the Qur'an itself there are several words that have meanings that still have a connection with time as in the Quran surah al Insan first verse.

Has not come to man a time from a time that he is not yet something that can be called?

In that verse Allah mentions the word Dahr, which means to use the very long past that has been passed through by this universe.

The next word is Ajal, the word Ajal is a time that has been appointed for something this verse is mentioned several times by the Qur'an as in the Quran surah al Qashash verse 28 Allah (swt) says

He (Moses) said, "It (the covenant) is between me and you. Whichever of the two appointed times I perfected, then there was no demand on me (again). God bears witness to what we say."

Then the word waqt as researchers discussed at the beginning of time is a measure for a time or epoch. In the Qur'an the word waqt is mentioned at least three times in the Qur'an as one example is in the Quran surah An-Nisa verse 103 Allah (swt) says

When you have finished praying, make remembrance to Allah (remember and mention Him), whether you are standing, sitting, or lying down. When you feel safe, perform the prayer (perfectly). Indeed, prayer is a timed obligation upon believers. The other two verses are found in Quran surah Al-Hajr verse 38 and Quran Surah Al Shad verse 81.

The last is the word Ashr, this word can be interpreted as absolute time. This meaning ashr is the most important thing in human life. The word Ashr itself means "feeling" as if time must be used by humans to squeeze their thoughts and energy in this context at any time and throughout the time (Anam 2018). Maybe at this time you are wondering why of the many surahs that have the meaning of time but the Quran surah Al-Ashr was chosen (Anam, 2018).

From some notions about the word that has a meaning similar to time. The researcher concluded that, al-Asr has a general meaning of meaningful time, not specifying a time that has limitations. Talking about an advanced civilization, the thing that needs to be considered is how a group of believers want to be invited forward, therefore researchers take the meaning of al asr as one of the ethos chosen to produce an advanced civilization. One of the sons of Mr. AR Fachruddin, Sukriyanto AR, gave the meaning of wal asri as "time that continues to move forward", "for the sake of time that continues to move forward". Therefore, those who are constantly improving themselves for good change have actually implemented the content of this verse (Achmat Mubarok, n.d.). In application in life, if there is someone who wants to improve himself in a better direction, it would be nice for him to do a plan of what things he will do in the future, because one of the characteristics of an advanced civilization is visionary, namely his mind is advanced, his insight is broad and his foresight is beyond the times. By having a forward thinking someone will be able to predict the changes that will occur in the future, so that someone who has forward thinking can prepare the things he predicts in the future to the maximum (Suryani et al., n.d.).

### 6. Development Science and Arts

Since the beginning of its history, Islam has paid great attention to the development of science, technology, and art. In its teachings, Islam encourages its people to seek knowledge, study the universe, and develop expertise in various fields. As a Muslim, the Quran has declared itself as a guide or commonly referred to as the word Huda, there are many verses that state that the Qur'an as a guide, one of which is the Quran, surah Al-Baqarah, the second verse.

This book (Qur'an) has no doubt in it; (He is) a guide for the devout.

It is clearly said in the verse that the Qur'an is a guide for Muslims. So, it is fitting for Muslims to make the Quran as a guide for life. Then what is the relevance to the development of ilmpu knowledge and technology in the Qur'an? in the verses of the Qur'an itself there are many verses that talk about science, even the first revelation that came down was the Quran surah al-alaq verses 1-5 which is the command to read, from here we researchers conclude that to advance the development of science and technology we should read a lot in our lives (Danusiri, 2016).

If you look at the history of Islamic sufficiency. One of the most prominent aspects of the development of science in Islam was his contribution to mathematics and astronomy. Muslim scientists such as Al-Khwarizmi, Ibn al-Haytham, and Al-Biruni had made major breakthroughs in the development of mathematics, astronomy, and the sciences of falak. They also carried out translations of Greek and Indian classics into Arabic, which later became the basis for the development of science in the Islamic world. In addition, the development of science in Islam is also reflected in the fields of medicine and pharmacy. Many medical discoveries and techniques introduced by Muslim scientists, such as Avicenna and Avicenna, have contributed greatly to the advancement of medical science in the world. So what about the current conditions? Researchers have not found anything prominent in Muslims but researchers do not say that Muslims are in decline, when this study was written researchers concluded that currently civilization is still in a period of developing to become an advanced civilization. Like previous scientists as Muslims living in modern times have at least two main guidelines in developing Islamic science and technology, the first makes Islamic Agidah as a paradigm of science and the second makes Islamic sharia as a standard of science and technology as a standard of daily life. (Nasrul Fauzi & Ibnu Chudzfaizah, 2019). Not only science, In the field of technology, Islamic civilization also made a significant contribution.

Examples are the development of sophisticated irrigation systems, innovative architectural techniques, and the development of navigation systems for sea trade. In addition, the invention of paper, the application of the Arabic numeral system, and the development of the mechanical clock system were also important contributions of Islamic civilization in the field of technology. In the field of art, Islam also has a rich and diverse artistic heritage, such as mosque architecture, calligraphy, carving, music, and sculpture. Art in Islam often reflects beauty and perfection, and has deep spiritual and philosophical value. When carrying out the development of science and technology, scientists are encouraged to study the philosophy of science because by studying scientific philosophy, they will realize their limitations and not be trapped into intellectual arrogance. This needs to be done in order to open up an attitude of self-openness among the environment. (Sulhatul Habibah, 2017).

Thus, the development of science, technology, and art in Islam has contributed greatly to world civilization. The role of Islam in developing science, technology, and art is not only part of history, but also an inspiration for the development of science and technology in the present. By understanding and appreciating Islam's scientific and artistic heritage, we can continue to inspire and encourage future generations to engage in the development of science, technology, and art that benefit mankind. The religion of Islam strongly emphasizes how the context of science is developed, even the first wakyu that comes down to us is surah al-alaq verses 1 to 5 which instruct us to read,

reading is the main gateway in gaining knowledge. When reading a Muslim should be driven by awe or curiosity towards knowledge. In addition to being an obligation in studying, a Muslim is encouraged to develop the knowledge he has gained (Fitri Mulyani & Nur Haliza, 2021).

#### **Conclusion**

The conclusion on the topic of discussion of the Quran *Surah* Al Ashr in building an advanced civilization are (1). Surah Al Ashr teaches the importance of time and its wise use in building an advanced civilization. The first verse of this surah mentions that man is truly at a disadvantage except those who believe, do righteous deeds, exhort one another in righteousness, and exhort one another in patience. This shows that time wasted without doing good and beneficial deeds is a loss to human beings (Sofia Ratna awaliyah Fitri, n.d.). (2). Surah Al Ashr also teaches the importance of faith and pious deeds in building an advanced civilization. Strong faith and godly deeds carried out sincerely and consistently will bring goodness and progress to individuals and society. In the context of civilization, faith and godly deeds become a strong moral foundation for building a just, competitive, and sustainable society. (3). Surah Al Ashr emphasizes the importance of advising one another in truth and patience. In building an advanced civilization, collaboration and cooperation between individuals and groups is essential. Advising one another in truth means reminding each other to do good, avoid evil, and improve oneself. Meanwhile, advising each other patiently means supporting and strengthening each other in the face of challenges and obstacles in building civilization. (4) Surah Al Ashr also teaches the importance of keeping time and avoiding waste in building an advanced civilization. Time wasted without doing good and beneficial deeds is a loss to human beings. Therefore, humans need to manage time well, avoid waste, and focus on productive and useful activities. (5) Surah Al Ashr teaches the importance of maintaining a balance between the life of the world and the Hereafter in building an advanced civilization. Man needs to live the life of the world with full responsibility and awareness of the afterlife. In the context of civilization, this means building a sustainable and future-looking civilization, without neglecting the spiritual and moral values on which life is based.

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