

The History of Islam

Islam is a religion that was founded by Muhammad in Mecca around the 7th century. However, most Muslims argue that Muhammad did not found the religion; he simply reminded people of what they already knew. . Islam means “submission to God.” Its followers are called Muslims meaning one who surrenders or submits to Allah.

According to historical documents, Muhammad was born in AD570 to a powerful tribe of the Quraishin Mecca. His father was called Abdullah and his mother was Aminah. Both his parents died when he was young and he was left in the custody of his grandfather. After the death of his grandfather, Muhammad was raised by his uncle Abu Talib. His uncle trained him in business skills and when he was of age Muhammad worked for a rich widow named Khadijah. He was very hardworking and competent. Khadijah was very impressed by his character that she offered her hand in marriage which Muhammad gladly accepted. Muhammad was at this point 25 years old while Khadijah was 40. History records that Muhammad loved Khadijah so much that he married no other woman till her death. The couple had six children, two boys and four daughters. However, five of these children died in their infancy; only one daughter Fatima survived.

After his marriage, Muhammad began to think about religious issues. He began taking retreats in deserts and mountains searching for the ‘truth.’ During one of these retreats while meditating at Mt Hera, Muhammad received a revelation from God. He was told by the angel Gabriel to read to which he replied he could not. Then the first five verses of God were revealed to him; Sura 96:1-5, “Recite in the name of your Lord who created! He created man, out of a (mere) cloth of congealed blood. Recite; and thy Lord is most bountiful. He who had taught by the pen, taught man what he knew not.” According to the Koran, this was the first revelation of Allah to Muhammad and Muslims refer to the night Muhammad received the first revelation as the ‘Night of Power.’ Other revelations were to follow then after and they were accompanied by such power that Muhammad could shiver and sweat.

Muhammad then shared these revelations with his family and friends and Khadijah became his first convert. However, the message spread among the people of Mecca. The voice of the angel Gabriel persisted telling him to “arise and warn.” It is said that when he received the instruction to proclaim his message publicly, Muhammad was told to condemn the paganism and idolatry of Mecca. He then started teaching in Mecca highlighting the judgement day. This was the day the good would be rewarded and the wicked would be punished in Hell. He made little impact amongst his people, the **Quraish**. They laughed at him. On the other hand, the public condemnation of idolatry became an economic threat to the prosperity of Mecca (E:\history of Islam Muslim faith.mht). As a result, hostility against Muhammad and Islam began. At one time there was actually an attempt on his life. The few converts Muhammad had made in Mecca were persecuted. Many of them fled to the then Abyssinia now Ethiopia. In 622 AD, Muhammad and his followers fled to Medina where they were promised protection by the leaders of Medina who had accepted the Islamic faith. The escape is called the Hijraby Muslims and marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar. Once in Medina, Muhammad abandoned the quiet, non-political approach he had used in Mecca and established himself as a religious, political and military leader. In a short period of time, the religion of Islam had gained numerous followers. Some historical sources show that Muhammad resorted to intimidation and force as a way of spreading Islam. For example, entire tribes and cities were ‘converted’

through threats of war or by conquests. Whilst in Medina, Muhammad and his followers resorted to looting in order to fend for themselves (Watt 1982). In 630 AD, the city of Mecca was defeated and it fell under the control of Muhammad. He then destroyed all the idols of Mecca and declared the Kaabah to be the place of worship for Allah. After taking Mecca, the influence of Islam spread throughout the Arabian Peninsula. Many people declared their allegiance to Islam and Muhammad either out of choice or out of cohesion. As a political and military leader, Muhammad consolidated his power until his death in 632 AD. At the time of his death Muhammad had established a system of religion and social order which is still dominant today.

Authority of the KORAN

The nature of the Quran & why the Quran has supreme authority for Muslims

- Muslims believe the Quran is the direct word of Allah.
- It is divine, heavenly, and authentic & considered to be a miracle.
- first **Surah (chapter)** to be revealed was **Surah 'Alaq**. This happened in the cave of **Hira** on the **Night Of Power (laylatulqadr)** through the angel **Jibrail**.
- The entire Quran was revealed over a period of 23 years.
- The prophet Muhammad would dictate the verses to his scribes and tell them where to write each verse and where to place them.
- Many of the companions also memorised the Quran.
- The Quran is split into 114 **Surahs**(chapters), 30 **ajza**(parts). Each **surah** has **ayat**(verses).
- All chapters begin with **bismillah** except **Surah Taubah**.
- It was compiled into book form during the time of Abu Bakr after a number of **huffaz** were martyred. This responsibility was given to Zaid Ibn Thabit (r.a).
- The copy was kept with Hafsa (r.a), the daughter of Umar (r.a).
- During the time of Uthman (r.a), differences arose in its recitation. He asked for 7 copies to be made in the dialect of the Quraish from the original that was kept with Hafsa (r.a), and had them distributed in different regions. All other copies were to be disregarded.

The Quran has supreme authority for the Muslims because:

- They believe it contains the exact words of Allah.
- It was brought to people through the final prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) as a message to all of mankind.
- It was recited exactly by the prophet and recorded immediately and accurately by his companions.
- It has never been changed, so they are sure their knowledge is correct.
- It's a miracle from Allah because Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) didn't know how to read and write.
- It shows them how to follow the straight path.
- It inspires them to struggle in the cause of Allah.
- It makes clear to them their obligations and duties towards Allah.
- It enables them to practice their religion properly and to be guided.
- It encourages them through the examples of faithful believers.
- It develops love for Allah.

Respect for the Quran

- Muslims show respect for the Quran by performing **wudhu** before touching it.
- Keeping it on a high place.
- Trying to follow and practice upon what it says.
- Reading it every day.
- Avoid eating and drinking whilst reading.

- Handle it with respect.

Importance of revelation of holy Quran to Prophet Muhammad

- Revealed on the **Night of Power** in the cave of *Hira* on the mountain of light *Jabal an-nur*.
- It was the time when the first words of the Quran were revealed.
- He became the final chosen messenger because he received this message from Allah.
- It proves that the Quran is the word of Allah.
- It was the beginning of many such revelations which continued for a period of 23 years.
- Quran is regarded as a great miracle.
- It restored the original message sent to previous prophets & clarified the errors of previous nations.

ULTIMATELY, THE HOLY KORAN IS THE ONLY SOURCE OF AUTHORITY IN ISLAM

- ✚ The Holy Qur'an, most sacred book of Islam, is a collection of revelations from Allah to the Prophet Muhammad. The Qur'an acts as a guide for the Muslim, covering all aspects of everyday Muslim life. The Qur'an is by far the most important and influential foundation of Islam, but it is not the only source of authority. In addition to the Qur'an, the Sunnah of the Prophet, preserved in the hadiths, offers guidance on proper Islamic conduct. The approved practice of the community (ijma) is another source of authority, while Ijtihad is the practice of finding judgement on issues not covered in the Qur'an. Additionally the Sharia is the body of laws which govern the Islamic state. While there are several sources of authority in Islam, the Qur'an is overwhelmingly the most important, and it is only through the Qur'an that other sources gain their stature.
- ✚ It cannot be doubted that the Qur'an is the 'supreme authority' of Islam. Allah is the ultimate source of authority, and it is his word revealed to the Prophet Muhammad that is preserved in the Created Qur'an - a direct copy of the Uncreated Qur'an, written in Arabic and existing in heaven with Allah. The Angel Gabriel revealed the words of the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad. Muhammad regarded this as Allah's 'standing miracle' - Muhammad himself was illiterate, so, claim Muslims, the Qur'an had to be the word of Allah. Furthermore the Qur'an is considered a literary masterpiece, a collection of beautiful prose unrivalled in the Muslim world, and surely a heavenly text.
- ✚ The Qur'an states, 'In the month of Ramadan the Koran was revealed, a book of guidance for mankind with proofs of guidance distinguishing right from wrong' (2:185). The Qur'an includes an immense amount of guidance in many areas. There are rules regarding;
- ✚ modesty, marriage, divorce, inheritance, feuding, intoxicants, gambling, diet, theft, murder, fornication and adultery. Exploitation of the poor, weak, widows, women, orphans and slaves is vividly condemned. False contracts, bribery, abuse of women, hoarding of wealth and usury are denounced.
- ✚ Some Muslims claim that 'everything' can be found in the Qur'an. Huston Smith argues that it is not possible to place too much emphasis on how central the Qur'an is to the Muslim, and to how important it is in the creation of other Islamic doctrines and hence sources of authority. It is expected that children memorise large sections of

the Qur'an, and it shapes the understanding of every part of Muslim life . Philip K. Hitti notes; 'not only is it the basis of the religion, the canon of ethical and moral life, but also the textbook in which the Moslem begins his study of language, science, theology, and jurisprudence'.

- ✚ Often described as second in authority, or complementary to the Qur'an is the Sunnah of the Prophet. 'Sunnah' means the 'trodden path'. Originally referring to the accepted practices...

Concept of God in Islam

Introduction

It is a known fact that every language has one or more terms that are used in reference to God and sometimes to lesser deities. This is not the case with Allah. Allah is the personal name of the One true God. Nothing else can be called Allah. The term has no plural or gender. This shows its uniqueness when compared with the word "god," which can be made plural, as in "gods," or made feminine, as in "goddess." It is interesting to notice that Allah is the personal name of God in Aramaic, the language of Jesus and a sister language of Arabic.

The One true God is a reflection of the unique concept that Islam associates with God. To a Muslim, Allah is the Almighty Creator and Sustainer of the universe, Who is similar to nothing, and nothing is comparable to Him. The Prophet Muhammad was asked by his contemporaries about Allah; the answer came directly from God Himself in the form of a short chapter of the Qur'an, which is considered to be the essence of the unity or the motto of monotheism. This is chapter 112, which reads: *"In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Say (O Muhammad), He is God, the One God, the Everlasting Refuge, who has not begotten, nor has been begotten, and equal to Him is not anyone"*.

Some non-Muslims allege that God in Islam is a stern and cruel God who demands to be obeyed fully and is not loving and kind. Nothing could be farther from the truth than this allegation. It is enough to know that, with the exception of one, each of the 114 chapters of the Qur'an begins with the verse "In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate". In one of the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), we are told that *"God is more loving and kind than a mother to her dear child"*.

On the other hand, God is also Just. Hence, evildoers and sinners must have their share of punishment, and the virtuous must have God's bounties and favors. Actually, God's attribute of Mercy has full manifestation in His attribute of Justice. People suffering throughout their lives for His sake should not receive similar treatment from their Lord as people who oppress and exploit others their whole lives. Expecting similar treatment for them would amount to negating the very belief in the accountability of man in the Hereafter and thereby negate all the incentives for a moral and virtuous life in this world. The following Qur'anic verses are very clear and straightforward in this respect.

Verily, for the Righteous are gardens of Delight, in the Presence of their Lord. Shall We then treat the people of Faith like the people of Sin? What is the matter with you? How judge you?

Islam rejects characterizing God in any human form or depicting Him as favoring certain individuals or nations on the basis of wealth, power or race. He created the human-beings as equals. They may distinguish themselves and get His favor through virtue and piety only.

The concepts that God rested on the seventh day of creation, that God wrestled with one of His soldiers, that God is an envious plotter against mankind, and that God is incarnate in any human being are considered blasphemy from the Islamic point of view.

The unique usage of Allah as a personal name of God is a reflection of Islam's emphasis on the purity of the belief in God that is the essence of the message of all God's messengers. Because of this, Islam considers associating any deity or personality with God as a deadly sin that God will never forgive, despite the fact that He may forgive all other sins.

The Creator must be of a different nature from the things created because if He is of the same nature as they are, He will be temporal and will therefore need a maker. It follows that nothing is like Him. If the maker is not temporal, then he must be eternal. But if he is eternal, he cannot be caused, and if nothing caused Him to come into existence, nothing outside Him causes Him to continue to exist, which means that he must be self-sufficient. And if He does not depend on anything for the continuance of His own existence, then this existence can have no end. The Creator is therefore eternal and everlasting: "He is the First and the Last".

He is Self-sufficient or Self-subsistent, or, to use a Qur'anic term, Al-Qayyum The Creator does not create only in the sense of bringing things into being, He. also preserves them and takes them out of existence and is the ultimate cause of whatever happens to them.

“ God is the Creator of everything. He is the guardian over everything. Unto Him belong the keys of the heavens and the earth” (39:62-63).

“ No creature is there crawling on the earth, but its provision rests on God. He knows its lodging place and its repository” (11:16).

God's Attributes

If the Creator is Eternal and Everlasting, then His attributes must also be eternal and everlasting. He should not lose any of His attributes nor acquire new ones. If this is so, then his attributes are absolute. Can there be more than one Creator with such absolute attributes? Can there be, for example, two absolutely powerful Creators? A moment's thought shows that this is not feasible.

The Qur'an summarizes this argument in the following verses: *“ God has not taken to Himself any son, nor is there any god with Him: for then each god would have taken of that which he created and some of them would have risen up over others”* (23:91).

“ And why, were there gods in earth and heaven other than God, they (heaven and earth) would surely go to ruin” (21:22).

The Oneness of God

The Qur'an reminds us of the falsity of all alleged gods. To the worshippers of man-made objects it asks: *“ Do you worship what you have carved yourself”* (37:95). *“ Or have you taken unto yourself others beside Him to be your protectors, even such as have no power either for good or for harm to themselves”* (13:16).

To the worshippers of heavenly bodies it cites the story of Abraham: *“ When night outspread over him, he saw a star and said: This is my Lord. But when it set, he said: I love not the setters. When he saw the moon rising, he said: This is my Lord. But when it set, he said: If my Lord does not guide me, I shall surely be of the people gone astray. When he saw the sun rising, he said: This is my Lord; this is greater. But when it set, he said: O my people, surely I quit that which you associate, I have turned my face to Him who originated the heavens and the earth; a man of pure faith, I am not one of the idolators”* (6:76-79).

The Believer's Attitude

In order to be a Muslim, that is, to surrender oneself to God, it is necessary to believe in the oneness of God, in the sense of His being the only Creator, Preserver, Nourisher, etc. But this belief, later called Tawhid Ar-Rububiyyah, is not enough. Many of the idolators knew and believed that only the Supreme God could do all this. But this was not enough to make them Muslims. To tawhid ar-rububiyyah, one must add tawhid al-'uluhiyyah. That is, one acknowledges the fact that it is God alone who deserves to be worshipped, and thus abstains from worshipping any other thing or being.

Having achieved this knowledge of the one true God, man should constantly have faith in Him, and should allow nothing to induce him to deny

truth.

When faith enters a person's heart, it causes certain mental states that result in certain actions. Taken together, these mental states and actions are the proof for the true faith. The Prophet said: “ *Faith is that which resides firmly in the heart and which is proved by deeds*”.

Foremost among those mental states is the feeling of gratitude towards God, which could be said to be the essence of ibada (worship).

The feeling of gratitude is so important that a non-believer is called 'kafir', which means 'one who denies a truth' and also 'one who is ungrateful'.

A believer loves, and is grateful to God for the bounties He bestowed upon him, but being aware of the fact that his good deeds, whether mental or physical, are far from being commensurate with Divine favors, he is always anxious lest God should punish him, here or in the Hereafter. He, therefore, fears Him, surrenders himself to Him and serves Him with great humility. One cannot be in such a mental state without being almost all the time mindful of God. Remembering God is thus the life force of faith, without which it fades and withers away.

The Qur'an tries to promote this feeling of gratitude by repeating the attributes of God very frequently. We find most of these attributes mentioned together in the following verses of the Qur'an: “ *He is God; there is no god but He. He is the Knower of the unseen and the visible; He is the All-Merciful, the All-Compassionate. He is God; there is no god but He. He is the King, the All-Holy, the All-Peace, the Guardian of the Faith, the All-Preserver, the All-Mighty, the All-Compeller, the All-Sublime. Glory be to God, above that they associate! He is God, the Creator, the Maker, the Shaper. To Him belong the Names Most Beautiful. All that is in the heavens and the earth magnifies Him; He is the Almighty, the All-Wise*” (59:22-24).

“ *There is no god but He, the Living, the Everlasting. Slumber seizes Him not, nor sleep. To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth. Who is there that shall intercede with Him save by His leave? He knows what lies before them, and what is after them, and they comprehend not anything of His knowledge save such as He wills. His throne comprises the heavens and earth. The preserving of them oppresses Him not; He is the All-High, the All-Glorious*” (2:255).

People of the Book, go not beyond the bounds in your religion, and say not as to God but the truth.

“ *The Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, was only the Messenger of God, and His Word that He committed to Mary, and a Spirit from Him. So believe in God and His Messengers,*

and say not "Three". Refrain; better it is for you. God is only one God. Glory be to Him -- (He is) above having a son" (4:171).

Salvation in Islam

Islam tries to answer the central question of how humanity came to forget the creator. From Muslim perspective, the fall of humanity has everything to do with forgetfulness and this forgetfulness is due to negligence. As a result, the story of the fall is recounted five times in the Koran. According to the Koran, before Adam approached the forbidden tree he possessed three things namely divinity, knowledge and power. Even angels worshipped him. He was given dominion over the world. After he tested the forbidden tree he was expelled from heaven. This resulted in man becoming separated from God. Thus, man moved from love to shame and from nearness to separation. As a result, humanity languishes in a state of alienation. It removed itself from the providence of God. According to Islam, God is not affected by what man has done to himself. God is the merciful, compassionate, forgiver, clement and kind. This means that man is alienated from Him but God is not alienated from man.

What then can humanity do to recover the original memory of God? In Islam, salvation is not an act of conversion but of restoration. It is a process of “remembrance, recollection, and confirmation of a knowledge deeply embedded in the very substance of our being.” (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/salvation). This process is initiated by the act of repentance and giving up everything that perpetuate forgetfulness. Muslims believe that Adam repented of his sin (Sura 2: 38). Adam and Eve reunited on Mt Arafat and he became God’s first prophet. The two were commissioned to go into the world and move humanity to repentance. For a Muslim, to repent is to live a life marked by a consciousness of God’s presence. It is a realization that only man is far from God and that God is near. Salvation implies humanity becoming Muslims, that is, becoming submitters to the will of God and remembering Him always.

For one to receive salvation in Islam one has to recognize Islam’s first pillar, that is, there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet. It also means observing the ritual of prayer. Muslims pray 5 times a day and it reminds them that they are worshipful servants of Allah. In prayer their foreheads touch the floor and this is the highest expression of humility. They also fast regularly and undertake pilgrimage to Mecca. Salvation also means God has finally and fully revealed himself in the Koran.

For Muslims death is certain since life is not permanent. Thus Muslims always say, “To Allah we belong, to Allah we return.” Life for them does not end with physical death. They hold the idea of resurrection of the dead. Upon resurrection there shall be judgement. They hold the view that the world shall pass away, so nothing in the world is permanent. This is the reason why Muslims place less importance on worldly or material things. The Koran refers threateningly to the day of judgement. Tribulation and suffering will befall those who deny God, the self-righteous and those who persist in forgetting. Those who have heard the messages of a prophet of whether Moses, Jesus, Muhammad, etc, but chose not to follow will receive eternal damnation in hell. Paradise is assured to those who believe. The humble and the pious will be in agreement with Allah. Then the brotherhood of believers will be instituted: the umma (community of believers). Alienation will be overcome. On the day of judgement, humanity will once more be united with Allah and salvation will be available to everyone. Salvation in

this case is initiated by Allah, but it starts with one becoming humble, remembering the creator and submitting to his will.

Sects in Islam

There are two main sects in Islam namely, SunniIslam and ShiaIslam. The division between these two groups dates back to the death of the Prophet Muhammad when his followers were confronted with the decision of who would be his successor as the leader of Islam.

1. **Sunni:** - This constitutes 90% of the Muslim community world-wide. Sunni comes from the word 'sunnah' which means the teachings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad. This group, therefore, follows the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad. Sunnis believe that no clear instructions were left by Muhammad regarding his successor. As such, the successor should be chosen from the community of Muslims and this can be done democratically. After the death of Muhammad the Sunnis established the Caliphate. They accept the line of successions as passing through the four caliphs: Abu Bakr, Omar ibn al-Khattab, Othman ibn Affan and Ali ibn Abi Talib. They oppose the Shiites' belief in the infallibility of the imams.
2. **Shia** :- The name shia means partisan, so this group believe that only Muhammad's descendants (those from his family) are the rightful heirs to spiritual leadership and these constitute the imamate (this is opposed to the Caliphate in Sunni Islam). Imams are Muhammad's descendants and they believe that Ali ibn Abi Talib was the rightful successor to Muhammad. They believe that Ali should have become Muhammad's first successor by inheritance because he was his relative and also had married, Muhammad's daughter. Imams are from their perspective infallible manifestations of God and perfect interpreters of the Koran. The imam in ShiaIslam should be a political as well as a spiritual leader. A good example of an imam we know today is Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran. They also place much importance on the shariah law. Within the Shiites themselves sects are also common; the three sects are (a) the Seveners- these believe that there were seven imams. This group is found in India, Yemen and East Africa. (b) the Twelvers- these believe that there were twelve imams. (c) the Ibadis- these believe that the community may elect any suitable Muslim as imam.

NB. Due to their different beliefs conflict between these sects is not uncommon. Such conflicts are being witnessed in Iraq and North Africa.

ATTRIBUTES OF ALLAH

Allah is not only known by this name, but is also known by attributes that are found in the **Qur'an** and the **hadith** of the Prophet Muhammad. Commonly, Muslims say there are 99 terms that are considered to be both names as they refer to God and attributes because they describe different aspects of God.

These attributes all refer to the **singular** being of God, but are representative of various **traits**. A metaphor for these attributes given by Hamza Yusuf, a well-known scholar, is the numerous **colours** that appear when light is refracted.

Allah has the most beautiful names and perfect attributes. All His names and attributes are **unique**, as the Qur'an states, 'Nothing is like Him, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.' Therefore, none of whatever He has created has similar names or attributes in any way.

E.g.s. of verses in the Qur'an on beautiful names of Allah. In chapter 7, verse 180, people are commanded to call on God by these names:

The most beautiful names belong to Allah: so call on Him by them.

Also, in chapter 59, verses 22-24 mention God having multiple attributes and include some of these names:

Allah is He, than whom there is no other god? Who knows (all things) both secret and open; He Most Gracious, Most Merciful. (22) Allah is He, than whom there is no other god? The sovereign, the Holy One, the Source of Peace (and Perfection), the Guardian of Faith, the Preserver of Safety, the Exalted in Might, the Irresistible, the Supreme: Glory to Allah! (High is He) above the partners they attribute to Him. (23) He is Allah the Creator the Evolver, the Bestower of Forms (or Colours). To Him belong the Most Beautiful Names: whatever is in the heavens and on earth, doth declare His Praises and Glory: and He is the exalted in Might, the Wise.

There is also a hadith from the Prophet that underscores the virtues of knowing and memorizing the names of God: i.e. he who commits them to memory would get into **Paradise**.

Classifications of Divine Attributes

- Divine attributes are divided into two as **Essential Attributes** and

Positive Attributes.

Essential Attributes:

- Allah's essential attributes **belong to Allah only**; they are not owned by any other being. For instance, the attribute Pre-Eternity is not in question for any other being. The essential attributes have no relation with other beings.

1- Wujud (Existence)

2- Qidam (Pre-eternity),

3- Baqa (Everlastingness),

4- Wahdaniyyah (Oneness, having no partners),

5- Qiyam bi Nafsihi (Self-existence),

6- Mukhalafalil-Hawadith (Non-resemblance to the creatures)

Existence (Wujud):

- That attribute expresses that **Allah exists**. The existence of Allah does not depend on any other being; it is His **necessary attribute**. It is His **personal** attribute. That is, His existence is based on His own being and is an obligatory (morally binding) attribute of His being. Therefore, the attribute of 'Necessary Being' is used for Allah.

To claim the non-existence of Allah means denying the universe and the beings in the universe because it is He who creates everything.

Qidam (Pre-eternity):

It means Allah, the Exalted, has **no beginning**. Allah, the Exalted, is **pre-eternal**. He has **always existed**. He **was not created** afterwards.

It is impossible to imagine a moment that Allah did not exist. In fact, it is He who **created time and place**. Allah is free from the conditions of time and place. He is the pre-eternal Lord of Majesty.

Huduth (origination in time) which is the opposite of pre-eternity is not in question for

Allah, the Exalted.

Baqa (Everlastingness):

Allah's existence is without ending; He is always present. As Allah's existence has no beginning, it has no ending. He is both pre-eternal and everlasting. The opposite of everlastingness, that is, *fana*, means to have an ending. It is out of question for Allah.

Mukhalafalil-Hawadith (Non-resemblance to the creatures):

It means Allah's non-resemblance to the creatures that were created later. Allah does not resemble any of His creatures in person or in terms of His attributes.

No matter what we think of Allah, He is different from whatever we can imagine. Allah is a divine and blessed being whose existence is obligatory, pre-eternal and everlasting, who does not need anything or anybody, who is free from all deficiencies and who has all attributes of perfection.

Allah defines His personality as follows in the Quran:

"There is nothing whatever like unto Him, and He is the One that hears and sees (all things)." (ash-Shura 11)

The above was confirmed by Muhammad when he said,

"Allah is other than what comes to your mind."

Qiyam bi Nafsihi (Self-existence):

It means Allah continues to exist without needing any other beings or places. All of the beings originated afterwards. Therefore, they need a Creator and a place.

However, the existence of Allah, who is the Creator of everything, is not dependent on anything.

However, He is the Creator of everything. Everything other than Him is a creature. The Creator never needs His creatures.

Wahdaniyyah (Oneness):

Oneness is the most important attribute of Allah's perfection. This attribute expresses that Allah is one in his **personality, attributes and actions** and that He has no partners in His sovereignty and activities **(negates trinity concept)**.

In Islam, the belief of oneness of Allah (tawhid) forms the foundation of all of the religious beliefs.

No belief or deed is valid unless one has the belief of oneness in his heart.

Islam presents the mankind with the belief of oneness and calls mankind to accept that Allah is one and to make Him free from any associates.

In this context, the most important truth after accepting the existence of Allah is the belief of oneness. Belief in Allah has no significance and value without the belief of oneness.

Some of the verses that mention the oneness of Allah in the Quran are as follows:

"Say: He is Allah the One and Only." (al-Ikhlās, 1).

“Is there a Creator, other than Allah, to give you Sustenance from heaven or earth?” (Fatir, 3).

“Nor is there any god along with Him: (if there were many gods), behold, each god would have taken away what he had created, and some would have lorded it over others.” (al-Mu’minun, 91)

“If there were in the heavens and the earth, other gods besides Allah, there would have been ruin in both!” (al-Anbiya, 22)

SifatSubutiyah (Positive Attributes):

- 1- Hayah (Allah is alive.)
- 2- Ilm (Allah knows everything pre-eternally.)
- 3- Irada (Allah is free to do anything He wishes.)
- 4- Qudrah (Allah has power over everything.)
- 5- Sam' (hearing) (Allah hears everything.)
- 6- Basar (seeing) (Allah sees everything.)
- 7- Kalam (Allah speaks without needing any organs or voice.)
- 8- Takwin (creating) (Allah creates out of nothing.)

Unlike His essential attributes, Allah’s **positive attributes** are not completely different from the other beings. For instance, the attribute of hayah (**Life**) is also present in human beings though it is different in terms of its content and nature.

Allah has will; man has will, too. However, there are differences between these two wills. Allah's will is unlimited and absolute; man's will is limited.

Man's will came into being as a result of Allah's will. All of the other positive attributes are shared by angels, jinn and human beings.

Hayah (Life):

It means Allah Almighty **has life** and is qualified with the attribute of life. That attribute, which is obligatory for Allah Almighty, is not like the one that originates from the combination of matter and spirit seen in the creatures and it is pre-eternal and post-eternal. It is the real life that is the origin of all lives.

Therefore, the attribute of life is defined as a pre-eternal attribute that enables Allah Almighty to be qualified with attributes like knowledge, will and power.

The opposite of the attribute of life is death. It is impossible for Allah.

Ilm (Knowledge):

It means Allah knows everything, and His knowledge surrounds everything. The Creator that created this world in the best way and perfect order and that rules it must know the things that He created including the finest details.

How can something whose benefit, necessity and wisdom are not known be created? Then, it is necessary for the Creator first to know something then to create it in accordance with the necessities of knowledge in order to create it.

In addition, to reward people with belief and good deeds and punish people who disobey and go astray is only possible through knowing the details of what those people do.

The opposite of knowledge is ignorance, heedlessness and forgetfulness. They cannot be thought about Allah.

Iradah (Will):

It means Allah wishes something to happen like that and not happen like this; it means He determines everything as He wishes.

Allah has a perfect will. He created this universe in accordance with His pre-eternal will.

Everything that happened and will happen in the universe happened or will happen through the wish or will of Allah. Whatever he wishes takes place; whatever he does not wish never takes place.

The following is stated in the Quran regarding the issue:

“Allah createth what He willeth; when He hath decreed a plan, He but saith to it ‘Be’, and it is!” (Aal-i-Imran, 47) In a hadith, the following is stated: “Whatever Allah willed took place; whatever He did not will did not take place.”

Qudrah (Power):

Power means that Allah Almighty does things on beings according to His will and knowledge; it means **He has the power** to do and to create everything.

The universe that we see and the beauties and the undisturbed order it has is the greatest proof that Allah has endless power and He has power over all things.

Takwin (Creating):

Takwin means *inventing and creating*. Takwin is defined as creating something out of nothing, bringing into existence.

Sam' (Hearing) and Basar (Sight):

They mean that Allah hears everything and sees everything. The concepts like distance – nearness, secrecy – openness, darkness – light do not act as barriers for the hearing and sight of Allah.

He hears the whispers in us and the prayers that we say in our hearts. He answers them in accordance with His wisdom.

It is mentioned many times in the Quran that Allah Almighty is Sami' (the All-Hearing) and Basir (the All-Seeing).

The opposites of the attributes of hearing and sight are blindness and deafness, which are impossible for Allah.

Kalam (Speech):

It means Allah, the Exalted, **speaks** without needing letters and voice. Allah has the attribute of kalam, that is, saying, speaking. That attribute is pre-eternal and post-eternal.

Therefore, Allah is also called al-Mutakallim (the Speaker). The Quran is called Kalamullah, meaning the word of Allah.

The revelations that Allah sent to His prophets, the divine books He sent to them and the inspirations He sends to His creatures are all the manifestations of His attribute of kalam.

The Five Pillars of Islam



- View Larger Image

These are the foundation of Muslim life and Muslims are required to observe them with utmost devotion. Just like a building lacks stability without strong pillars, a believer's relationship with God lacks focus without observance of the five pillars. These pillars form the foundation and starting point for all other good deeds and acts of worship to God.



The Five Pillars of Islam

1. Faith or belief in the Oneness of God (Allah) and the finality of the Prophethood of Muhammad, peace be upon him (pbuh);
2. Establishment of the 5 daily prayers;
3. Concern for and almsgiving to the needy;
4. Self-purification through fasting in the month of Ramadan.
5. The pilgrimage to Mecca for those who are able.

Faith (Iman)

“There is none worthy of worship except **God** (Allah) and **Muhammad** (pbuh) is the messenger of God.” This declaration of faith is called the Shahadah, a simple formula that all the faithful pronounce. The significance of this declaration is the belief that the only purpose of life is to serve and obey God, and this is achieved through the teachings and practices of the Last Prophet, Muhammad (pbuh).

Prayer (Salah)

Prayer is the name for the obligatory prayers that are performed five times a day, and are a direct link between the worshipper and God. There is no hierarchical authority in Islam and there are no priests. Prayers are led by a learned person who knows the Quran and is generally chosen by the congregation.

Prayers are said at dawn, mid-day, late-afternoon, sunset and nightfall, and thus determine the rhythm of the entire day. These five prescribed prayers contain verses from the Quran, and are said in Arabic, the language of the Revelation. Personal supplications, however, can be offered in one's own language and at any time.

Although it is preferable to worship together in a mosque, a Muslim may pray almost anywhere, such as in fields, offices, factories and universities. Oftentimes visitors to the Muslim world are struck by the centrality of prayers in daily life.

Obligatory Charity (Zakah)

An important principle of Islam is that everything belongs to God, and that wealth is therefore held by human beings in trust. The word zakah means both "purification" and "growth." Our possessions are purified by setting aside a proportion for those in need and for the society in general. Like the pruning of plants, this cutting back balances and encourages new growth.

Each Muslim calculates his or her own obligatory charity individually. This involves the annual payment of 2.5% of one's capital, excluding such items as primary residence, car and professional tools.

An individual may also give as much as he or she pleases as voluntary charity, and does so preferably in secret. Such charity is not limited to financial giving.

The Prophet said, "Even meeting your brother with a cheerful face is an act of charity." The Prophet also said: "Charity is a necessity for every Muslim." He was asked: "What if a person has nothing?" The Prophet replied: "He should work with his own hands for his benefit and then give something out of such earnings in charity." The Companions of the Prophet asked: "What if he is not able to work?" The Prophet said: "He should help the poor and needy." The Companions further asked: "What if he cannot do even that?" The Prophet said: "He should urge others to do good." The Companions said: "What if he lacks that also?" The Prophet said: "He should check himself from doing evil. That is also an act of charity."

Fasting

Every year in the month of Ramada-n, all Muslims fast from dawn until sundown—abstaining from food, drink, and sexual relations with their spouses.

Those who are sick, elderly, or on a journey, and women who are menstruating, pregnant or nursing, are permitted to break the fast and make up an equal number of days later in the year if they are healthy and able. Children begin to fast (and to observe prayers) from puberty, although many start earlier.

Although fasting is beneficial to health, it is mainly a method of self-purification and self-restraint. By cutting oneself from worldly comforts, even for a short time, a fasting person focuses on his or her purpose in life by constantly being aware of the presence of God. God states in the Quran: “O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed to those before you that you may learn self-restraint.” (Quran 2:183)

Pilgrimage (Hajj)

The pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj) is an obligation only for those who are physically and financially able to do so. Nevertheless, over two million people go to Makkah each year from every corner of the globe providing a unique opportunity for those of different nations to meet one another.

The annual Hajj begins in the twelfth month of the Islamic lunar year. Pilgrims wear special clothes: simple garments that strip away distinctions of class and culture, so that all stand equal before God.

The rites of Hajj, which are of Abrahamic origin, include going around the Kaaba seven times, and going seven times between the hills of Safa and Marwa as did Hagar (Hajira, Abraham’s wife) during her search for water. The pilgrims later stand together on the wide plains of Arafat (a large expanse of desert outside Mecca) and join in prayer for God’s forgiveness, in what is often thought as a preview of the Day of Judgment.

The close of Hajj is marked by a festival, the Eid al Adha, which is celebrated with prayers and the exchange of gifts in Muslim communities everywhere. This and Eid al Fitr, a festive day celebrating the end of Ramadan, are the two holidays of the Islamic calendar.

BASIC BELIEVES OF ISLAMIC FAITH

The **basic beliefs** of Islam or cardinal articles of the Islamic faith include are the beliefs in the **unity and oneness of God, belief in angels, belief in prophets, belief in revealed Scriptures and belief in the hereafter.**

These are independent **doctrinal principles** which lie at the heart of the Islamic faith. These are the criterion for belief versus disbelief. Acceptance of these beliefs renders one a believer (mumin), to reject them is to be an unbeliever (kafir).

Belief in the Unity and Oneness of God

Muslims believe that:

- there is only one Supreme Being or Ultimate Reality who is Allah or God Almighty.
- He is not only the Creator of the world but also its Sustainer.
- God is distinct from His creation in that He is infinite, without beginning and without end.
- He neither begets nor is He begotten.
- God is omnipotent, omniscient, all-loving, all-powerful and all-merciful.
- Has no hands, no feet, no nose, no ears or face like human beings.
- He is free from all faults and weaknesses.
- He has created angels to look into certain affairs of the world.
- He sent messengers for guidance of his creatures.
- Jesus is not the son of God, he is not God, but he is a human being and a messenger of Allah.

Angels

Allah has created angels from light & they perform a variety of functions. They do not disobey Allah. They do the work given to them by Allah & are intermediaries between God & the human beings. Angels cannot be seen and only Allah knows how many Angels there are.

They are kind and honourable protectors of man. As intermediaries, they encourage people towards righteous and pious deeds. They also record all the people's deeds from the cradle to the grave. For this purpose, it is believed that a couple of angels are assigned to each individual,

one to record all the righteous deeds and the other to note all wicked deeds. When the day of judgement comes, these would serve as testimony of the man's earthly behaviour.

Four of them are as famous. They are;

1. **Angel Jibra'eel** – who brought Allah's messages to His Messengers.
2. **Angel Israafeel** – who will blow the trumpet horn on the Day of Judgement.
3. **Angel Meekaa'eel** – who brings rains and food to Allah's creatures.
4. **Angel Izra'eel** – who takes away the life from people when they die.

Belief in Prophets

- Muslims hold that from time to time, God raised prophets/messengers among the nations. Although each prophet was sent to a particular nation, all the prophets had one mission, that is, to bring to their people a religion that was fundamentally the same - a religion characterised by requiring its adherents to completely obey God.

Such a prophet is a messenger (Rasool or Nabee) who was selected by Allah to bring Allah's orders to the people. Prophets are truthful, never tell lies, they do not do bad things/sins, bring Allah's orders in full & sometimes by the order of Allah they do miracles.

Many prophets came to the world & only Allah knows how many there were and we should believe in all the Messengers sent by Allah. Since the prophets from diverse cultures taught what was essentially the same truth, every Muslim of necessity believes in all prophets. They belong to the same class as God's obedient and exemplary servants and are on a par with one another.

The first of all the Messengers are; Adam & others include Shees, Idrees, Ismail, Isaac, David, Jacob, Moses, Lot, Jesus etc. Jesus was not the son of God, but was a messenger of Allah, had no father only had a mother Mary.

However, Muhammad is regarded as the "Seal of the Prophets, the last of all the messengers or prophets of Allah, he is the highest after Allah, there will be no more messengers after him. A person who says is Allah's messenger is a liar.

Belief in Revealed Scriptures

- Muslims believe in all of the original scriptures revealed by God to His Messengers. Prior to Muhammad's time, God provided guidance to mankind communicating revelations to different prophets each of whom passed on the messages to which he was specially sent.

- A Muslim must believe in every scripture mentioned by God in the Quran. However, none of the divine messages revealed to individual prophets was universal since man had not yet been conditioned to receive the final and complete guidance that God had in store for mankind. Hence these earlier messages or revelations were necessarily limited and incomplete.

- God, The Giver, revealed them and they were, in their original forms, the actual word of God. The scriptures God mentions in the Quran are as follows:

1. The original Scrolls as revealed to Abraham.
2. The original Torah as revealed to Moses.
3. The original Psalms as revealed to David.
4. The original Injeel (Gospel of Jesus) as revealed to Jesus.
5. The Quran as revealed to Muhammad (which still remains in its original form).

- Mandivenga notes that, 'The last and concluding link in the series of revealed Scriptures is the holy Quran whose entire contents were revealed to Muhammad through the angel Gabriel in the Seventh Century AD. The Quran is unique in that it is the only Holy Book that has been preserved in its exact original form from the time it was received. Muslims believe it is literally inspired.'

- Muslims do not consider the scriptures revealed before the Quran, which are presently in circulation in various editions and versions, to be an accurate representation of their original revealed form. According to the Quran people have distorted these scriptures for their own worldly gain. What remains is a mixture of the original divine text with man-made interpretation and contamination.

Belief in the hereafter

Muslims believe that this life is very short in comparison with the life hereafter. Muslims are required to have faith in the reality of the hereafter, the Day of Judgement, Resurrection, Paradise and Hell.

The eschatology of Jews & Christians had a profound effect upon Muhammad and his scheme of the end of time in the Quran reflects these influences.

Hopfe notes that, 'The Quran says that when one dies, his body returns to the earth and his soul goes into a state of sleep until resurrection day. On this day the angel of Allah will sound a trumpet, the earth will be split and the bodies will re-join their souls. The resurrected are then judged by Allah.

Those who have been faithful and virtuous will be rewarded and those who have been evil will be punished. All mankind is judged on the basis of the record of deeds in a book kept for the purpose, (Hopfe, 276).

On the day of judgement, the smallest things will be revealed, lying and deception will no longer be possible. Ultimate reward is Paradise and the penalty is Hell. Heaven and Hell are literal places that actually exist, they are not symbols or metaphors.

The Quranic vision of the afterlife is both spiritual and physical. Since the last Day will be accompanied by bodily resurrection (Quran 4:39-40), the pleasures of heaven and the pain of hell will be fully experienced.

The garden of paradise is a heavenly mansion of perpetual peace and bliss with flowing rivers, beautiful gardens and the enjoyment of one's spouses and beautiful dark-eyed female companions. In Paradise there is no heat, or cold, no disease, fatigue, or evil will exist.

- The damned will be banished to hell, forever separated from God. Anguish and despair will be coupled with physical torment, for they will experience perpetual fire. It is an eternally horrible place, beyond imagination, a fire whose fuel is men and stone.

Belief in the Divine Decree

God has **power** over everything. All that happens is according to **His Will**, thus nothing is supernatural or random.

God, in his timeless, knows everything that goes on in His creation. The ever watching knows everything that will happen in the future. God's divine knowledge is perfect.

God, the Subduer, has absolute sovereignty over His creation. Everything that exist within his creation and every event that occurs is a direct result of His creating it. Nothing happens in creation except by His power, and His knowledge.

The Origins of Islamic Law

Islamic law represents one of the world's great legal systems. Like Judaic law, which influenced western legal systems, Islamic law originated as an important part of the religion.

Sharia, an Arabic word meaning "the right path," refers to traditional Islamic law. The Sharia comes from the Koran, the sacred book of Islam, which Muslims consider the actual word of God. The Sharia also stems from the Prophet Muhammad's teachings and interpretations of those teachings by certain Muslim legal scholars. Muslims believe that Allah (God) revealed his true will to Muhammad, who then passed on Allah's commands to humans in the Koran.

Since the Sharia originated with Allah, Muslims consider it sacred. Between the seventh century when Muhammad died and the 10th century, many Islamic legal scholars attempted to interpret the Sharia and to adapt it to the expanding Muslim Empire. The classic Sharia of the 10th century represented an important part of Islam's golden age. From that time, the Sharia has continued to be reinterpreted and adapted to changing circumstances and new issues. In the modern era, the influences of Western colonialism generated efforts to codify it.

Development of the Sharia

Before Islam, the nomadic tribes inhabiting the Arabian peninsula worshiped idols. These tribes frequently fought with one another. Each tribe had its own customs governing marriage, hospitality, and revenge. Crimes against persons were answered with personal retribution or were sometimes resolved by an arbitrator. Muhammad introduced a new religion into this chaotic Arab world. Islam affirmed only one true God. It demanded that believers obey God's will and laws.

The Koran sets down basic standards of human conduct, but does not provide a detailed law code. Only a few verses deal with legal matters. During his lifetime, Muhammad helped clarify the law by interpreting provisions in the Koran and acting as a judge in legal cases. Thus, Islamic law, the Sharia, became an integral part of the Muslim religion.

Following Muhammad's death in A.D. 632, companions of Muhammad ruled Arabia for about 30 years. These political-religious rulers, called caliphs, continued to develop Islamic law with their own pronouncements and decisions. The first caliphs also conquered territories outside Arabia including Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Persia, and Egypt. As a result, elements of Jewish, Greek, Roman, Persian, and Christian church law also influenced the development of the Sharia.

Islamic law grew along with the expanding Muslim Empire. The Umayyad dynasty caliphs, who took control of the empire in 661, extended Islam into India, Northwest Africa, and Spain. The Umayyads appointed Islamic judges, *kadis*, to decide cases involving Muslims. (Non-Muslims kept their own legal system.) Knowledgeable about the Koran and the teachings of Muhammad, *kadis* decided cases in all areas of the law.

Following a period of revolts and civil war, the Umayyads were overthrown in 750 and replaced by the Abbasid dynasty. During the 500-year rule of the Abbasids, the Sharia reached its full development.

Under their absolute rule, the Abbasids transferred substantial areas of criminal law from the *kadis* to the government. The *kadis* continued to handle cases involving religious, family, property, and commercial law.

The Abbasids encouraged legal scholars to debate the Sharia vigorously. One group held that only the divinely inspired Koran and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad should make up the Sharia. A rival group, however, argued that the Sharia should also include the reasoned opinions of qualified legal scholars. Different legal systems began to develop in different provinces.

In an attempt to reconcile the rival groups, a brilliant legal scholar named Shafii systematized and developed what were called the "roots of the law." Shafii argued that in solving a legal question, the *kadi* or government judge should first consult the Koran. If the answer were not clear there, the judge should refer to the authentic sayings and decisions of Muhammad. If the answer continued to elude the judge, he should then look to the consensus of Muslim legal scholars on the matter. Still failing to find a solution, the judge could form his own answer by analogy from "the precedent nearest in resemblance and most appropriate" to the case at hand.

Shafii provoked controversy. He constantly criticized what he called "people of reason" and "people of tradition." While speaking in Egypt in 820, he was physically attacked by enraged opponents and died a few days later. Nevertheless, Shafii's approach was later widely adopted throughout the Islamic world.

By around the year 900, the classic Sharia had taken shape. Islamic specialists in the law assembled handbooks for judges to use in making their decisions.

The classic Sharia was not a code of laws, but a body of religious and legal scholarship that continued to develop for the next 1,000 years. The following sections illustrate some basic features of Islamic law as it was traditionally applied.

Family Law

Cases involving violations of some religious duties, lawsuits over property and business disputes, and family law all came before the *kadis*. Most of these cases would be considered civil law matters in Western courts today.

Family law always made up an important part of the Sharia. Below are some features of family law in the classic Sharia that would guide the *kadi* in making his decisions.

- Usually, an individual became an adult at puberty.
- A man could marry up to four wives at once.
- A wife could refuse to accompany her husband on journeys.
- The support of an abandoned infant was a public responsibility.
- A wife had the right to food, clothing, housing, and a marriage gift from her husband.

- When the owner of a female slave acknowledged her child as his own, the child became free. The child's mother became free when the owner died.
- In an inheritance, a brother took twice the amount as his sister. (The brother also had financial responsibility for his sister.)
- A husband could dissolve a marriage by repudiating his wife three times.
- A wife could return her dowry to her husband for a divorce. She could also get a decree from a *kadi* ending the marriage if her husband mistreated, deserted, or failed to support her.
- After a divorce, the mother usually had the right of custody of her young children.

Criminal Law

The classic Sharia identified the most serious crimes as those mentioned in the Koran. These were considered sins against Allah and carried mandatory punishments. Some of these crimes and punishments were:

- adultery: death by stoning.
- highway robbery: execution; crucifixion; exile; imprisonment; or right hand and left foot cut off.
- theft: right hand cut off (second offense: left foot cut off; imprisonment for further offenses).
- slander: 80 lashes
- drinking wine or any other intoxicant: 80 lashes.

Officials of the caliph carried out the penalties for these crimes.

Crimes against the person included murder and bodily injury. In these cases, the victim or his male next of kin had the "right of retaliation" where this was possible. This meant, for example, that the male next of kin of a murder victim could execute the murderer after his trial (usually by cutting off his head with a sword). If someone lost the sight of an eye in an attack, he could retaliate by putting a red-hot needle into the eye of his attacker who had been found guilty by the law. But a rule of exactitude required that a retaliator must give the same amount of damage he received. If, even by accident, he injured the person too much, he had broken the law and was subject to punishment. The rule of exactitude discouraged retaliation. Usually, the injured person or his kinsman would agree to accept money or something of value ("blood money") instead of retaliating.

In a third category of less serious offenses such as gambling and bribery, the judge used his discretion in deciding on a penalty. Punishments would often require the criminal to pay a reparation to the victim, receive a certain number of lashes, or be locked up.

Criminal Procedure

The victim of a criminal act or his kinsman ("the avenger of the blood") was personally responsible for presenting a claim against the accused criminal before the court. The case then went on much like a private lawsuit. No government prosecutor participated although certain officials brought some cases to court.

The classic Sharia provided for due process of law. This included notice of the claim made by the injured person, the right to remain silent, and a presumption of innocence in a fair and public trial before an impartial judge. There were no juries. Both parties in the case had the right to have a lawyer present, but the individual bringing the claim and the defendant usually presented their own cases.

At trial, the judge questioned the defendant about the claim made against him. If the defendant denied the claim, the judge then asked the accuser, who had the burden of proof, to present his evidence. Evidence almost always took the form of the direct testimony of two male witnesses of good character (four in adultery cases). Circumstantial evidence and documents were usually inadmissible. Female witnesses were not allowed except in cases where they held special knowledge, such as childbirth. In such cases, two female witnesses were needed for every male witness. After the accuser finished with his witnesses, the defendant could present his own.

If the accuser could not produce witnesses, he could demand that the defendant take an oath before Allah that he was innocent. "Your evidence or his oath," the Prophet Muhammad taught. If the defendant swore he was innocent, the judge dismissed the case. If he refused to take the oath, the accuser won. The defendant could also confess to a crime, but this could only be done orally in open court.

In all criminal cases, the evidence had to be "conclusive" before a judge could reach a guilty verdict. An appellate system allowed persons to appeal verdicts to higher government officials and to the ruler himself.

Islamic Law Today

In the 19th century, many Muslim countries came under the control or influence of Western colonial powers. As a result, Western-style laws, courts, and punishments began to appear within the Sharia. Some countries like Turkey totally abandoned the Sharia and adopted new law codes based on European systems. Most Muslim countries put the government in charge of prosecuting and punishing criminal acts. In the area of family law, many countries prohibited polygamy and divorce by the husband's repudiation of his wife.

Modern legislation along with Muslim legal scholars who are attempting to relate the will of Allah to the 20th century have reopened the door to interpreting the Sharia. This has happened even in highly traditional Saudi Arabia, where Islam began.

Since 1980, some countries with fundamentalist Islamic regimes like Iran have attempted to reverse the trend of westernization and return to the classic Sharia. But most Muslim legal scholars today believe that the Sharia can be adapted to modern conditions without abandoning the spirit of Islamic law or its religious foundations. Even in countries like Iran and Saudi Arabia, the Sharia is creatively adapted to new circumstances.

Statements From the Classic Sharia

1. A Muslim could be tried and punished for not performing his religious duties.
2. A woman counted as one-half a man if called as a witness in a trial.
3. When the owner of a female slave acknowledged her child as his own, the child became free. The mother became free when her owner died.
4. The most serious crimes in the Sharia included adultery, highway robbery, theft, and drinking alcohol.
5. Islamic criminal courts exercised due process of law.
6. If witnesses were not produced, the defendant could be asked to take an oath before Allah that he was innocent.
7. Punishments included death by sword and stoning, mutilation, lashes, retaliation, "blood money," reparation, and imprisonment

What is Sharia?

The term Sharia comes from an Arabic word meaning “path to the water,” which reflects the concept that Sharia is divine guidance drawn mainly from the Qur’an and Sunnah (teachings and guidance of Prophet Muhammad) for the purpose of helping humanity draw close to God and live in kindness and justice with His Creation. The term Sharia is used by Muslims to refer to the values, code of conduct, and religious commandments or sacred laws which provide them with guidance in various aspects of life.

While Sharia is often translated as “Islamic law,” a more accurate term for “Islamic law” in Arabic is *fiqh* which refers to the human endeavor to interpret and apply Sharia.

2. What are the sources of Sharia and how is it interpreted?

Sharia is derived from the Qur’an and Sunnah (prophetic tradition) by qualified scholars who use an interpretative process that includes *qiyas* (reasoning by analogy) and *ijma* (consensus) and also relies on precedent. This process of interpreting Sharia is called *fiqh* in Arabic, which means “deep understanding.” *Fiqh* is determined by qualified religious scholars who use their knowledge, understanding, and individual judgement to interpret religious law, often arriving at different conclusions with their interpretations. *Fiqh* is an interpretation of Sharia and, like *halakha* or Jewish law, is an ongoing effort and process. Because much of Sharia is interpretative, it has a degree of flexibility that allows it to function in different societies and cultures. Thus, Islamic law or *fiqh* has historically functioned in diverse areas in the world, generally with a demonstrated record of tolerance and pluralism towards different cultures and religions.

3. What issues does Sharia address?

Sharia addresses both personal and communal aspects of life. For the most part, Sharia is concerned with personal religious observances such as prayer and fasting.

Sharia can be divided into two broad areas:

- Guidance in religious worship (*ibadat*), which is the central focus of Islam.
- Guidance in worldly matters (*mu’amalat*) such as visiting the sick, taking care of our parents, marriage, inheritance, investments and business affairs, etc.

It can be further divided into three more specific areas, some of which apply to American Muslims and some of which do not:

- Religious worship and ritual: American Muslims practice their acts of worship (prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, etc.) or rituals in the same manner as people of other faiths.
- Private social interactions (marriage, business, etc.): All religions have rules for marriage and ethical economics. These are private and voluntary, so American Muslims follow Islamic standards for these within the limits of American secular law. For example, civil law prohibits having more than one wife, so American Muslims must abide by this law (since Sharia recommends monogamy, this isn’t a problem). There are other aspects of marriage laws such as the *mahr* (gift from the husband to the wife) or the religious marriage contract which Muslims do observe. Since the Constitution allows such practices for all religions, it is also acceptable to practice this aspect of Sharia in America.

- Public law issues (criminal law, war and peace, etc.): These have no application in the U.S. Islamic scholars formulated rules in this area for Muslim-majority societies in other historical situations. But Sharia requires Muslims to obey “the law of the land” of the country they live in. The “law of the land” in the U.S. is the Constitution. Sharia requires American Muslims to support and follow the Constitution in all matters related to public law. Most aspects of Sharia are not meant to be government-enforced, because Sharia is largely a matter of conscience.

4. Do other religions have the equivalent of Sharia?

Yes. Most religions have sacred laws or religious standards for the different areas of life. For example, Jews have *halakhah*, which is very similar to Sharia in method and content. Catholics have the teachings of the magisterium (teaching authority), which deal with things like marriage, business practices, and social justice.

5. Where do people get their negative views of Sharia?

Some people falsely equate Sharia with criminal or *huddud* laws, which are centuries-old specific punishments for major crimes such as killing, adultery, or theft. *Huddud* laws are only a tiny part of Sharia and can only be applied by an Islamic state; it is questionable if any of the nations claiming to be “Islamic states” actually fit that description morally or structurally, so these laws are generally not applicable in a modern context, let alone in the U.S. Unfortunately, the misapplication of these laws by the Taliban or other contemporary groups or governments generally contradict both the letter and spirit of Sharia and have given it a bad name.

ROLE AND LEGACY OF MUHAMMAD

1. Explain the role of Muhammad in the establishment of Islam.
2. Evaluate the legacy of Muhammad as a prophet.
3. Examine the achievements of Muhammad in Islam.

Background Life of Muhammad

== Muhammad, the prophet of Arabia, has fulfilled for his people a role that combines the functions - of a distinguished **prophet, spiritual leader, teacher, evangelist, statesman, author, and reformer**. He has earned for himself as a consequence the respect and reverence of countless people, Muslim and non-Muslim everywhere.

- Muhammad rose from humble beginnings to become the final prophet raised by Allah. Muhammad was born in 570 C.E. in Mecca, orphaned at a young age; father died before his birth, followed by his mother six years later. Muhammad's grandfather, and then his uncle, cared for him for the remainder of his youth.

- As a young boy, he worked as a **shepherd** and later adopted the common Arab occupation of **trading** and was widely respected for his integrity and sincerity.

- Nevertheless despite his intelligence, he **could not read or write**, nor was he skilled in composing poetry, a hallmark of Arab society. Thus he did not author the Koran, Allah declares in the Quran, "[Muhammad] does not speak from his own desire. The Quran is nothing less than a revelation that is sent to him" (53:3-4).

== **Commendable character**, prior to prophet hood, Muhammad was greatly regarded for his **superior character and exceptional manners**, earning him the title of the 'Truthful One.' Meccans entrusted him with their possessions for safekeeping and he was often asked to **mediate disputes** as an impartial judge.

== **Social concern** - Muhammad detested the **polytheistic** Arab customs and did not participate in idolatry, was also deeply bothered by the many **social evils** in Arabia, such as the **ill treatment of women**, widespread **alcoholism**, constant **warfare** and **subjugation** of the poor.

== Muhammad often escaped the atmosphere of Mecca to a cave outside the city, isolating himself for days at a time in **meditation**. The mission of Muhammad began after a careful period of soul-searching and spiritual reassessment lasting over fifteen years and finally his call.

== **Revelation at Mecca** - Muhammad was a mature man of forty when he received the first revelation. It came to him as he was contemplating in a cave on Mt. Hira', above Mecca. One night, in the year 610 C.E., God sent the angel Gabriel with revelation to Muhammad. It marked the beginning of his prophethood and transformed his life entirely. As the prophet of God

receiving divine inspiration, all his efforts henceforth were devoted to **leading humanity back to the pure worship of God.**

== Initiated religious, moral and social **reformation** - Whereas earlier he removed himself from the social and spiritual corruption in Mecca, he now actively worked to reform it, called his fellow Meccans to cease their worship of idols and to affirm the **Oneness of God**; he also invited them to a life of **righteousness and piety.**

== Muhammad's preaching of monotheism and of social reform went hand in hand. He preached belief in the one God, God of Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, and the brotherhood of all Arabs in Islam, or "submission" to God.

== Eschatological message, Muhammad warned Meccans of an afterlife where they will be held accountable for their earthly deeds and also gave **joyful news of paradise** to those who believed and lived a God-conscious life.

== Political-social reformation, persistently challenged the moral and social norms governing Arabia, and particularly the values and institutional practices of Mecca, the hub of Arabia, under the powerful leadership of the Qurayshite oligarchy.

== Resistance and persecution, like previous prophets, Muhammad's **message was rejected** by many of his people who insisted on maintaining the religious and social customs of their ancestors. The **elite mocked** Muhammad, accusing him of deceit and madness. Only a few people believed in him, particularly the **poor and disadvantaged** who were attracted to his message due to its emphasis on **equality and justice.**

== The Hajj to Medina and religious revival, Prophet Muhammad and his small group of followers endured **persecution for 13 years in Mecca.** Eventually, they were forced to leave Mecca and migrate to Medina, a city whose people eagerly welcomed them. Here, Muhammad established the very first Islamic society which **eliminated the spiritual and social problems** rampant in the Arabian Peninsula. **Freedom of religion** was instituted in Medina; **women were honoured** and respected as equals; **racial discrimination was practically eliminated**; **tribal warfare** was replaced with united ties of brotherhood; **usury** and **alcohol** were completely forbidden.

== Return to Mecca and religious revival, within ten years Muhammad had gained so many followers that he was able to return and conquer Mecca. From this time on he was generally accepted by the faithful as the true final Prophet of God. Muhammad continued to lead his community both spiritually and in earthly matters until his death in 632.

== The role of Muhammad is hailed for the establishment of the concept of jihad that a struggle in the cause of Allah.

== The Arabic word *uswa* (**example**) in the original verse means example or model that should be obeyed and followed. In the Holy Quran the only verse that refers literally to the status of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) as a role model is as follows: *"Verily in the messenger of Allah you*

have a good example for him who looks unto Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah much." This verse shows the importance of Prophet Muhammad's Sunnah in the lives of Muslims. As a matter of fact, the Quran clearly states that Prophet Muhammad has a **superior character** and **demonstrates an exemplary life style**. One hadith states that, *"The best of speech is unquestionably the speech of Allah. That is the Book of Allah (the Quran). The best of guidance is the guidance of Muhammad..."*

The Legacy

== In the century following Muhammad's death, **Islam expanded in all directions**, absorbing the Persian and Byzantine Empires to the North, reaching as far as Spain in the West and extending its borders to include parts of India and China to the East. This rapid spread of Islam in such a short period of time has caused many to marvel at how a man with a simple message could produce such an astonishing impact on the world.

== The Sunnah and effect, in ranking Islamic religious literature, the Sunnah ranks as the second most significant aspect after the Quran. The term Sunnah involves every part of Muhammad's life, such as faith, worship, morality and ethics. It reflects the exemplary and role model status of Muhammad. Four main categories of information in the Sunnah are; principles and practices that describe the Prophet as a worshipper of and believer in Allah; texts related to the missions of Prophet Muhammad which make contact with and call people to the new reality, yet make it clear that he is a human being who only lives for his own mission; principles related to the aspects of Prophet Muhammad as a human, husband, father, relative and friend and the principles concerning Prophet Muhammad's leadership within the state administration, at the battle-ground, at the market place, at school or in the masjid.

== Muhammad was **the final prophet in a long line of messengers** sent by God which included, among others, Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus, peace be upon all of them. Like previous prophets, Muhammad called people towards **belief in the One God** and taught them to be just and merciful. Muhammad is the last messenger whom God chose to be the carrier of the last clear, comprehensive, complete message to mankind.

== Muhammad was a man who succeeded greatly in both the **religious and political spheres of life**. According to Hart, "He was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular levels... It is this unparalleled combination of secular and religious influence which I feel entitles Muhammad to be considered the most influential single figure in human history."

== Prophet Muhammad **set a model to be followed**, his character was the implementation of the teachings of this Koran.

{Indeed, in the Messenger of God, Muhammad, you have a good example to follow [...]}
(Qur'an 33:21)

{And indeed you [Muhammad] are of the highest noble character.} (Qur'an 68:4)

{Say, [O Muhammad to mankind], "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.} (Qur'an 3:31)

== guiding people to refine their character is also a major role of the Prophet (PBUH). Muhammad was also instructed to help people **purify themselves**, their hearts, actions, and to learn wisdom. The process of purification of the self here means to reach the balance, lead a healthy life and elevate spiritually above the base desires and inclinations

= The importance of the status of Prophet Muhammad as a role model is defined in the Holy Quran and in the Sunnah; this constitutes one of the foremost practices for Muslims.

= There is no disagreement among Muslims as to the fact that Prophet Muhammad constitutes the **best example with his morality**, actions, words and other features.

= It would not be correct to demote the Prophet's status as role model to a limited number of fields. This **status is related to all fields of life**.

= Prophet Muhammad's status as role model is important not only from the perspective of the individual, but also from the social perspective. Its binding features and determination of methods must be considered from these two perspectives.

= Prophet Muhammad's status as role model and the continuity of his sunnah are the most important components that provide a **unifying force** in the Muslim world.

= While the Qur'an in Islamic theology - conveys strictly the word of God, it remains in respect to the message contained therein a true mirror of Muhammad's character and his accomplishments

= It is important to study the **lives of the Companions** in order to understand and comprehend the status of Prophet Muhammad as a role model.

CONCEPT OF ETHICS IN ISLAM

1. identify the sources of ethical principles in Islam.

2. examine the rules of behaviour in Islam.

- The word “**ethics**” originates from the Greek word “ethos”, which means “character, spirit and attitude of a group of people or culture”

- Ethics is the area of study concerned with what is morally good and what is morally bad. Ethics represent a set of moral principles, rules of conduct or values.

- moral principles, and the rules that ought to govern human behavior and human interaction.

- Ethics means the science of morals Besides or a set of certain rules or a particular code of conduct which is being provided by a society or a religion.

- Islamic ethics is a set of norms which are guiding a common Muslim so that he may live good and civilized life.

-Islamic ethics are numerous, far reaching and comprehensive because Islamic Ethics deals with relationship between man and God, man and his fellow men, and other creatures of the universe, and man with his innermost self.

- Islamic Ethics provide the man with knowledge to distinguish good from bad, justice from injustice or courage from cowardice. Ethics is the human character that prescribes refraining from immoral conducts such as cheating, corruption, discrimination, lying, stealing, murder, assault, slander, rape, and fraud, and enjoins the virtues of honesty, compassion, sincerity, and loyalty.

Sources of Islamic Ethics

The Islamic ethics are derived from the two main sources of Islam viz (namely);

1. *Quran (Divine*

Revelation) i.e. those universal standards of right and wrong that prescribe what humans ought to do as taught by the Quran and

2. *Sunnah*, demonstrated in the exemplary life (actions and words) of the Prophet Muhammad, therefore making it universal, perfect and above all valid for all the times.

- In Islam, while the Quran lays the foundation of ethical concepts and standards, the way of life of the Prophet Muhammad contains the actual practice of such concepts. As ethical concepts taught by the Quran are embodied in the way of life of the Prophet Muhammad, both the Quran and Sunnah (the verbally transmitted record of the teachings, deeds, and sayings of the Prophet

Muhammad, as well as various reports about Muhammad's companions) are the source of Islamic ethics.

Various Quranic verses and a number of Prophetic narrations provide a code of ethics, which covers the dimensions of human behavior.

Ethical Teachings in the Qu'ran :-

The Ethical Teachings in the Qur'an are :-

1. Worship only Allah :- And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him (17:23)
2. Be Kind, humble and honorable to one's parents:- And that you be kind (Dutiful) to one's parents if one of or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honor(17:23/4:36).
3. Be Neither miserly nor wasteful in one's expenditure: - And spend not wastefully (your wealth) in the manner of a spendthrift. Verily, spendthrift is brothers of the devils (Shyatin) (17:26-27).
4. Do not engage in mercy killings for fear of starvation: - And kill not your children for fear of poverty (starvation). We shall provide for them as well as for you. Surely, the killing of them is a grave sin (17:31).
5. Do not commit adultery:- And come not near to the unlawful sex. Verily, it is a Fahishah (grave sin) and an evil way (17:32).
6. Do not kill unjustly:- And don't kill anyone whose killing Allah has forbidden, expect for just cause (17:33).
7. Care for orphaned children:- And come not near to the orphan's property expect to improve it, until he attains the age of strength (17:34).
8. Fulfill promises:- And fulfill (every) covenant. Verily! The covenant will be questioned about (17:34).
9. Be honest and fair in one's interactions:- And give full measure when you measure and weigh with a balance that is straight. That is good (advantageous) and better in the end (17:35).
10. Do not walk on earth arrogantly:- And walk not on earth with conceit and arrogance. Verily! You can neither rend nor penetrate the earth, nor can you attain a stature like the mountains in height (17:37/31:18).
11. Fear Allah and speak truth:- O you who believe! Keep your duty to Allah and fear him, and speak (always) the truth (33:70).
12. Remain away from intoxicants and gambling:- O you who believe! Intoxicants (all kind of alcoholic drinks), gambling, Al-Ansab and Al-Azlam (arrows for seeking luck or decision) are

an abomination of Satan's handiwork. So, avoid (strictly all) that (abomination) in order that you may be successful (5:90).

13. Be good and kind towards relatives and neighbours: - And do good to kinsfolk (relatives), orphans, the poor, the neighbor who is near of kin, the neighbor who is a stranger, the company by your side, the wayfarer (you meet) (4:36)

Significance of Ethics:

The significance of ethics can be explained and understood by the following points:-

1. Realization of creator and creation:- Ethics helps in realization of our creator, Allah. It is because of ethics a man gets acquainted with the purpose of creation also.
2. Elevation and Purification of Souls:- Man's soul gets elevated by the ethics. It also gets Med and begins to realize the purpose of life on earth.
3. Abolishment of discrimination:- Ethics plays a pivotal role in promoting equality and abolishes discrimination on various grounds such as class, creed, caste, color, sex, language, nationality, religion etc.
4. Civilization of human beings:- Ethics frees human beings from beastly instincts and civilizes them.
5. Man gets pleasure, goodwill and nearness of God:- It is the quality of ethics by which man gets pleasure, goodwill and nearness to his creator.
6. Executer of good morals and Abstainer of bad morals:- Ethics helps a man in the execution of good morals and at the same time he himself abstains from bad morals.
7. Selfishness ends:- A selfless behavior and attitude develops in people because of ethics. Simplicity, honesty, love, sympathy, piety, justice, truthfulness and modesty become the virtues of people.

LOVE AND ISLAM

Objectives;

- delineate the categories of love
- assess how love is demonstrated in Islam
- the Islamic concept of love refutes the assumption that, 'the Islamic way of life is filled with hate, harshness and rigidity.'
- **Love** is one of the most central attributes of God. God is described in the Qur'an as 'Wadood', a term for love which has been translated as 'The Affectionate' or 'One who is full of loving kindness'. In one verse [11:90], this divine attribute is connected with mercy and in the other [85:14], it is connected with forgiveness. This appears to show the inter-connectedness and interdependence of the attributes of love, mercy and forgiveness. Verses on these attributes appear in the Qur'an hundreds of times.
- The centrality of God's love is measured by manifestations of His love by creating the human in the best form, commanding the angels to bow down to Adam, enabling and appointing the human as trustee on earth, creating all that is on earth and in heavens for human benefit, granting the human the freedom to believe in God and obey Him or to reject belief and defy God's commands.
- Even for the sinful, the door of repentance is wide-open at any time prior to the time of death.
- Love, however is a two-way street. The Qur'an speaks also about the human duty to reciprocate God's love by loving God as well and to manifest the seriousness of that love in the form of willing and trusting submission to His will. Such submission is an act of gratefulness; Shukr. [31:12].
- There are **two elements** of God's love for humanity. The first element is all-embracing and unrestricted even for those who defy God and commit sins. Such love and care is seen in how God still provides them with all their needs and in His acceptance of them with even greater affection when they repent to Him and re-connect with Him. The second element of God's love is the bliss of greater love resulting from pursuing a virtuous life.
- Islamic religion urges its followers to adopt mutual love, affection and intimacy. This should be the case at all times, not just on specific days.
- Islam encourages showing affection and **love towards each other** all the time. In a *Hadeeth* (narration), the Prophet, said: "*When a man loves his brother, he should tell him that he loves him.*"
- In another *Hadeeth*, he said: "*By Him in Whose Hand my soul is, you will not enter Paradise unless you believe, and you will not believe unless you love each other. Should*

*I direct you to something that if you constantly did it, you would love each other?
Spread the greetings of peace among you."*

- The concept of love between mankind is done by promoting the love of God amongst our fellow man. This is manifested through our practice of the concept of "rahmah" which can be translated as love, mercy, compassion or forgiveness. The Prophet told his companions as narrated authentically in al-Targheeb (3/210): "You don't truly believe until you have rahmah for others." His companions responded, "We all have rahmah." The Prophet then told them, "Verily, you don't reach this level of faith by just having rahmah for those who are close to you, but you must have rahmah for everyone."
- Moreover, the Muslim's affection includes **inanimate** [non-living] beings. Talking about the Mountain of Uhud, the Prophet, said: *"This is Uhud, a mountain which loves us and we love it."*
- Love in Islam is all-encompassing, comprehensive and sublime, rather than being restricted to one form only, which is love between a man and a woman. Rather, there are more comprehensive, wider and sublime meanings.
- The mutual love between God and the human is the source of many other forms of love; of prophets, family, friends, neighbours, nation, humanity at large and all God's creation including animals, vegetation and even inanimate objects such as rivers, trees and mountains, there is **love for Allah the Almighty, the Messenger of Allah, the Companions, and the love of good and righteous people**. There is **love of the religion of Islam**, upholding it and making it victorious and the **love of martyrdom** for the sake of Allah the Almighty as well as other forms of love.
- Consequently, it is wrong and dangerous to restrict the broad meaning of love to this type of love only.
- **Husband wife love relationship**. Islam forbids the modern concept of boy-girl love relationship. Islam forbids anything that can possibly lead to fornication. According to verse 32 of Surah al-Israa in the Qur'an, "Don't even come close to fornicating." (17:32)
- As a result of this, it is prohibited to be alone with, flirt or touch someone from the opposite sex who isn't your spouse or immediate family. The only mixed gender interactions should be with lowering the gaze, hijab, only speaking about a necessity like buying something, asking directions, discussing religious matters, etc...
- This solves so many social problems prevalent in societies that don't observe this seemingly strict code of mixed gender mingling.
- A successful marital and family life is based on love and compassion: Pre-marital love leads to great corruption and grave crimes as well as the violation of sanctities and honor. According to Frederick Koenig, a professor of social psychology at Tulane University, says, *"Romantic love is very strong and emotional, but does not last, while real love means sharing the concerns of daily life and cooperation for it to continue."*

- Real love as expressed in the Koran, {*And of His Signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquillity in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy.*} [Quran 30: 21].
- The relationship between spouses is based on affection and mercy, not on ardent love, desire and passion. It is a relationship which is based on quiet love (affection) and mutual mercy, not illusions of love which fail to withstand reality or romantic fantasies which fail to create a successful marriage.
- How knowledgeable was 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, when he addressed women and said, "*If one of you does not love her husband, she should not tell him about this, because only a few homes are based on love; rather, people live together by virtue of good morals and Islam.*"
- The Messenger of Allah, gave us the best example of loving his wives. It was narrated in the pure *Sunnah* (tradition) that the Prophet, was careful to put his mouth on the same place from which his wife 'Aa'ishah, drank. During his final illness, he used her *Siwaak* (tooth stick) and died while he was reclined against her chest, between her neck and bosom.

ISLAM AND GENDER RELATIONS

Objectives: 1. Explain the role of women in Islam.

2. Evaluate the perception of women in Islam.

3. Assess factors which may hinder or promote women's progress in Islam.

What is the meaning of gender? What are gender relations?

- The status of women in Islam is one of the crucial topics and dominant themes in the modern era. Islam regards men and women as being of the same essence created from a single soul and a woman has a completely independent soul.
- Islamic societies have a code of conduct which men and women should follow. This code is designed along social, cultural and religious lines. Islam puts emphasis on gender roles. These gender roles often inhibit women from realizing their full potential especially in areas like education and economic development. The Koran regards men and women as equal in human dignity. However, this spiritual and ethical equality has not been reflected in most Muslim laws.

Negative Images of Islamic Women

- Whereas the Qur'an guarantees women equality, it is not always the case in practice that Muslim women enjoy full rights in their communities. In most instances, certain patriarchal cultures such as in Arabia, Afghanistan or Pakistan, tend to adopt a pattern of behaviour which has mixed the rules of the *shariah* with local customs. This patriarchal bias has been taken as a misinterpretation of the Koran and Muhammad's original intentions.

The Shariah gives men a position of privilege in comparison with women. Sura 4:34 refers to men as guardians over women. The Koran says that, "*Men are the maintainers and protectors of women because Allah hath made the one (the male) to excel the other...*" (Koran 4:34).

Women and Sexuality - women have far little control over their sexual lives and are often forced to submit to the erotic wishes and whims of men. The Koran stipulates that a married woman

is obliged to always make herself available to her husband for sexual intercourse and should not deny her husband sexual's demands.

This presentation of men as protectors and caregivers to women demotes women to a subordinate position. In most cases the authority of this verse has been used to restrict women's autonomy, freedom of movement and access to economic opportunities and independence.

The woman's sphere of influence is restricted to the home. The woman is expected to take on the role of wife and mother to the children while the man is seen as the provider, maintainer and protector of the woman and the children.

Poverty condemns women to positions of servanthood to their male counterparts.

Unlawful clothing and adornment in public:

-Tight clothing, transparent clothing, clothes that expose those parts of the body which are sexually attractive, extravagant clothes, swim suits, makeup or perfume in public, wigs and hairpieces. Gold and silk are prohibited to Men only, but lawful for Women. Generally in Islam, women's beauty and sexual attributes are not for public display.

Leadership positions - Islam has continued to engender patriarchy and male privilege which fuel gender disparities. Men are the ones who dominate and occupy leadership positions.

POSITIVE IMAGES OF WOMEN

Women and men are equal before God. Both are accountable before Allah. They equally receive their reward in the Hereafter for their faith and good deeds.

Wealth and Property ownership –Islam sees every woman, married or unmarried, as an equal individual in her own right. She has the right to own property, earn wealth and spend it as a man has. Her wealth does not become the property of her husband after marriage or divorce.

Economic status – economically, each man and woman is an independent legal entity. Men and women have the right to own their own individual property, engage in business, and inherit from others.

Education and employment – both men and women have equal rights to receive education and enter into gainful employment, as long as Islamic principles are not violated.

Professional positions – it is required within society to have professionals of both genders available for the benefit of the public e.g. society requires doctors, nurse, teachers, counsellors, social workers etc. when there is shortage of qualified personnel, it becomes obligatory for women or men to gain expertise in these fields to fulfil the needs of the Muslim community as long as guidelines of Ihsa are followed.

Equality and Creation Story - Islam looks at the woman as an equal, mature and capable partner of a man, without whom a family cannot exist and teaches that men and women are all the creation of Allah, existing on a level of equal worth and value.

The Qur'an has a variety of quotations that illustrate the equality of males and females from creation. One good example can be taken from Chapter 4, part of verse 1 which reads,

O Mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, who created you from a single person (Adam) and from him (Adam) he created his wife [Hawwa (Eve)] and from both he created many men and women...

This illustrates the point that Islam regards women as being created at par with men. They are equal human beings since they were created from a single soul. Gender equality is suggested in the creation of male and female from a single soul according to Young (2005: 229). This means Islam presents men and women as equal as far as basic human rights are concerned.

Payment of bride price as a form of respect - the woman, not her husband or other male relative, as has been the custom, is entitled to receive the dower (mahr) or dowry upon her marriage (a sum of money or its equivalent in household goods or chattels) from her husband. This makes her to become a party to the marriage contract rather than simply an object of sale. The dowry becomes her personal property. This has become a source of self esteem and wealth that has empowered women economically.

Woman and Inheritance laws – It can be noted that, prior to Islam, inheritance was kept within the male line. All rights were vested solely in male heirs to whom the women were dependant. The Koran granted inheritance rights to wives, daughters, sisters and grandmothers of the deceased, all of whom had no rights.

Dress Code – even though for both males and females, Islam requires that they wear proper, decent, modest, and clean clothes. Muslim women also are instructed by Allah in the Quran to wear as a minimum Hijab (head covering). At home, with her immediate family like her

husband children, brothers, uncles, grandfathers and other males (family members who are forbidden to them to marry her), and with other women, a Muslim woman may take her outer garments off, and be free to beautify herself as she wants Equality with man in terms of respect

In some societies women are treated according to ancestral customs and tribal tradition, but in Islam they are treated with full respect and honor. Islam preserves women's honor and dignity, and requires that she must be treated with respect and honor. Her femininity should not be exploited in any way, rather she is to be regarded and treated as human individual whose sexuality does not enter into her relationship with any person other than her husband.

Woman and her household position - Some Muslim writers are now being presenting a different view on the position of women. Abrahams (2007) refutes the notion that the burden of the household is a woman's responsibility. From her perspective, women generally perform most household chores for the sake of convenience.

Marriage contract - In Islam marriage cannot take place unless the female freely agrees to it and a dowry is given to her. Islam puts priorities for the husbands and wives.

Family responsibilities - The responsibility for providing for the family is on the husband, while the responsibility to care for the house and raising the children is on the wife. These are the main priorities, but cooperation between the husband and the wife is required and highly recommended.

It is important to note that the contemporary Muslim woman challenges the status quo. For example, professional women are not confined by religion to the domestic sphere. As Chitando (2007:73) puts it, "Muslim women have room to shape their destiny when they are determined."

In the area of marriage, Islam allows men to marry as many as four wives but the Koran stresses that monogamy is the best.

Husbands are encouraged to treat their wives equally and not to ill-treat them. However, husbands are allowed to divorce their wives at will.

Most Muslim men claim that in Islam the rights of women are recognized and respected.

Islam presents women and men as both equally responsible for sin. It means both man and woman are equal spiritually and religiously. As stated in part of Chapter 7 verses 22: 'So he misled them with deception...' According to Ammah, "The Koran teaches no theological

doctrines that make woman the originator of sin. It does not make Eve responsible for the fall of man. It refutes the assertion that woman was first deceived and declares in unambiguous terms that both man and woman were deceived simultaneously, and that both were forgiven after they had repented.”

As a result of the above, men and women have got equal chances of salvation. Rewards in their life after death are not dependent on their specific sex, but upon their faith and deeds; whether they are men or women. Thus, women of great esteem are mentioned in the Qur'an, for example, Chapter 28 verse 7; among them are Khadijah - Prophet Muhammad's (first) wife, Maryam - Prophet 'Isa's (i.e. Jesus) mother, and Prophet Musa's (Moses) mother.

Islam discourages all forms of infanticide unlike other religions in which birth of a girl child is a curse. According to the Qur'an, Chapter 16 verses 58-59 which say,

And when the news of (the birth of) a female (child) is brought to any of them, his face becomes dark and he is filled with grief. He hides himself from the people because of the evil of that whereof he has been informed. Shall he keep her with dishonour or bury her in the earth? Certainly, evil is their decision.

Islam therefore does not consider it a burden to give birth to a girl child, either a girl or a boy, any child is blessing and not a curse.

Women protection and security, Islamic scholars (jurists) of such Muslim tradition, portrays women as the weaker sex that always needs the guardianship of a male. According to Jamila, such interpretation gives men authority over women, makes men superior to women, women must obey men, and men can beat their wives.

Marriage, Polygamy & Inheritance

Islam offers women the right to choose a life partner. *'Oh you who believe! You are forbidden to inherit women against their will'* (Chapter 4 verse 19). It is also stated that, “and they (women) have rights (over their husbands as regards living expenses) similar (to those of their husbands) over them (as regards obedience and respect) to what is reasonable, but man have a degree (of responsibility) over them (Chapter 2 verse 228).

According to Badawi women are entitled to be protected by men and vice versa.

The idea of giving women the liberty to choose for themselves a life partner is further supported by Mutahhari who points out that the female sex has complete freedom and independence whatsoever when it comes to whom to marry. Islam dismissed the custom of *Shingar*, that is, the exchange of daughters in marriage.

The Quranic tradition allowing polygamy (Chapter 4:3), provides that, “*one is able to provide for the wives of up to four*” (Brown). As for those whose resources are limited, they should not marry many wives.

ISLAM AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Humanitarian Service

1. explain the concept of humanitarian service.
2. explain the link between jihad and humanitarian service.
3. examine the types of humanitarian service offered in Islam.

- The word “humanitarian” is defined in Webster’s Dictionary as “aperson devoted to promoting the welfare of humanity, especiallythrough the elimination of pain and suffering.”

Humanitarian teachings of the prophet

- emphasized helping all human beings, regardless of their races, colours or religions.
- emphasized that all human beings are one family, descending from the one and same father and mother, Adam and Eve. He spoke against racial or color discrimination.He spoke about the rights of life, right of basic necessities of life, right of property, protection of honor, personal freedom, freedom of expression, freedom of conscience and conviction, equality before law, the right of consultation. It was due to his humanitarian spirit that he joined a group of noble people in Makkah who wanted to protect the widows, orphans or strangers in their city.
- It is reported that after the Hijrah while the people of Makkah were still his enemies, it came to the attention of the Prophet that they were going through shortage of food due to some famine; the Prophet immediately sent some food for them from Madinah. This is another unique example of humanitarian spirit towards the enemies, even when they are at war.
- Prophet Muhammad never allowed the starvation of any person, even animals.
- As the leader of the community, in Madinah, the Prophet used to receive charity (Sadaqat and Zakat), but he never used it on himself or his family. He was, however, very generous in helping the poor people. He used to give with such a generosity that people used to say that he gives like a person who does not fear poverty.

Islamic Economic Principles¹³

The Muslim humanitarian sector is sustained by the following economic concepts of Islamic faith and practice. **Zakat**

Zakat is an obligatory religious tax intended to be used for social welfare and is comparable to Christian traditions of tithing. Organizations in the Muslim humanitarian sector rely heavily on Zakat donations to finance their operations. In most schools of Islamic law and ethics, the zakat amounts to about 2.5% of “cash, crops, and cattle.” Zakat al-Fitr: A special, obligatory, financial donation equivalent to the cost of one meal that is given on at the end of Ramadan, the obligatory month of fasting. **Sadaqa**Sadaqa is the concept of voluntary charity, including but not limited to monetary donations. Unlike Zakat, it does not have a preset amount. Sadaqa

is an important redistributive institution in Islam and is regularly utilized by Muslim aid organizations to mobilize in-kind services and donations. **Sacrificial Offering** The voluntary financial donation or slaughter of an animal, typically a lamb or goat, performed at the end of the period of Hajj pilgrimage. Meat from this offering is distributed locally and globally by pious networks and local organizations. This act of charity is referred to as Qurbani in South Asia and Udhiyya in the Arab speaking world. **Khums**Historically, Khums was a voluntary tax in which Muslims contribute one fifth of their surplus wealth (20%) in order to fulfill certain obligations to the Sultan or Caliph. Today, Khums is practiced by Shiite groups who direct their funds to the clerical establishment, which in turn redistributes them through its various charitable networks.

- **it is an obligation according to the Koran** - The Muslim religion considers both humanitarian actions and the duty to help as religious obligations by which all Muslims, rich and poor, are bound. Quranic texts and hadiths sometimes have an exhortatory tone encouraging charity works. “The first to enter paradise are those who do charitable works” and “Rescue prisoners, feed the hungry and look after the ill...” (Al- Bukhari).

- **humanitarian validates or confirmation one’s faith** – it is faith in action or proof of one’ faith.

- “those who believed and who did charitable works...” is cited a considerable number of times in the Quran, for example, “Verily Man is in loss except such as have faith and do charitable works...” (Al-`Asr 103:2-3) and again “For those who believe and do charitable works is every blessedness and a beautiful place of final return”.

- The Prophet stated, “alms is a proof...”, a proof which shows the piety of a Muslim transformed into a concrete act of pity towards the poor.

- **Erasing sins (Kaffara)** - The Muslim religion considers error to be human. The behaviour of man, whether in his relation to the Creator or in his relation to other creatures (humans, animals, plants...), cannot be perfect.

- Islam also established a system allowing sins to be erased by performing humanitarian acts. In this regard the Prophet said: “Alms extinguish sins exactly as water extinguishes fire ...”

- **God’s satisfaction** - Being considered as a rite and an act of worship, the humanitarian act is undertaken to obtain, amongst other things, God’s satisfaction. The Hadith of the Prophet states: “Amongst humans God loves those who help their fellow men...”

- “God loves the one who comes to the aid of the afflicted...”

- **Accountability in the hereafter** - The Muslim believes that life on earth is prolonged by other stages; these are the stay in the tomb, then the resurrection for the Day of Judgement and finally the eternal abode of either heaven or hell. The Muslim religion considers that life down here on earth is a transitory passage which prepares for eternity.

- Humanitarian actions which he undertakes will be subjected to the same accounting and will be rewarded. In Sura 57, Verse 18, of the Quran, there is the promise of increased rewards for the charitable persons: “Verily those who give alms, men and women, and lend to God a goodly loan, it shall be increased manifold, will be amply rewarded...” This verse underscores that despite the charitable act being destined for his fellow man, man will receive God’s reward. A humanitarian act is considered as a loan to God which will be repaid with significantly high interest.

Giving help to protect oneself against misfortune - Muslims also make donations to the disinherited with the aim of protecting themselves against misfortune. The texts and the Prophet’s prescriptions on this are many: “Charitable acts protect against a terrible death...” and “Charity shuts seventy doors of evil...”, and again “Charity extinguishes God’s anger and repels a terrible death...”

- It used to be widespread in Muslim societies to make a donation when someone was ill. All the while using the medical means available, the sick person or his family made a donation to the poor so as to benefit from God’s mercy. The Prophet’s recommendation encourages this: “Protect your money by giving zakat and treat your sick by charity...”

Therefore, Muslims make donations in very diverse circumstances: when faced with a crisis, on acquiring property, on harvesting, on making a commercial transaction, before travelling.

Donations transcend time (go beyond) -

Religious texts show that humanitarian acts count for all time: a donation is useful for the donor in terms of the past, the present and the future. A Muslim can, for instance, make a donation which erases past sins or procures a reward for a parent already dead. After the sudden death of his mother, a man went to ask the Prophet if his mother would be rewarded if he made a donation in her name. The Prophet replied in the affirmative.²⁷ As for the present and the future, the texts already cited underscore the importance and the diversity of rewards which can be received for accomplishing a humanitarian action.

- Humanitarian aid in Islam is understood as a gift to a grateful recipient from a generous donor, obliged by a religious duty towards God and the religiously defined community, the ummah.

- Personal care and compassion are more important qualities in aid provision. Muslims are obliged to show solidarity and support one another because they belong to the same religious community.

- Zakat as a right of the poor - aid as a right endowed by God to the poor and a duty imposed by God upon the wealthy, drawing on Islamic traditions of redistributive justice. “God orders people to take from the rich and give to the poor. God also said that it is the right of the poor to receive this money.”

- aid guided by principles of **universalism not discrimination** - In some organisations, the provision of aid is no longer restricted to fellow Muslims, but extended to “*those in need*”

regardless of gender, faith, background, or nationality,” as one NGO writes. Another organisation declares: *“Muslim Aid believes that all humans have the right to development.”* In concrete terms, this means that these organisations now include Christians, Hindus and other non-Muslims in their aid provision. “We even give our Ramadan food packages to non-Muslims!” a staff member proclaims. ***“We care about humanity; we don’t care about their faith.”***

- humanitarian aid guided by ethical and human value considerations rather than religion - A person from a British Muslim NGO says: ***“We don’t need to raise the Islamic flag when we do humanitarian work, we don’t need to say that we are more humanitarian because we are Islamic.”***

- desire to promote good and welfare of the society – the passion to serve mankind and love for humanity motivates Islamic charity work.

- teachings of the Koran and sayings of the Messenger of Allah motivates Islamic NGOs to conduct humanitarian work, Allah says in the Holy Quran: ***“And do not forget to do good to one another.” (2:238)***

- inspiration from Muhammad, One of the great reforms that the Prophet Muhammad (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) brought was the rights and treatment of the poor. Prior to the advent of Islam, the pagan Arabs used to disregard the poor, they would look down on them, and could care less about them; the poor people were basically an insignificant portion of society that did not matter.

Types of Humanitarian Service Offered

1) Providing help in ameliorating the sufferings of a distressed people

Share charitable and service delivery aims; some do development and advocacy

2) Educating and Training – providing hospitals and medical clinics

3) Social Services- care of orphans, the hungry and widows.

4) Material Services

5) Intangibles like providing company for a lonely person, a kind word, providing guidance and serving as a role model

ROLE OF ISLAMIC NGOs

Current Islamic charity and humanitarian work is widespread and takes a global approach.

Food Aid and the Fight Against Famine

- A saying of the Prophet (hadith) states: “the best of alms is to feed the hungry...”²⁸
- During the **Feast of Sacrifice**, when each Muslim family sacrifices a sheep, Prophetic tradition recommends that they eat one third, offer one third to friends and give **one third to the needy**.
- if a Muslim is unable to fast during the month of Ramadan because of a lengthy illness, for example, **he must feed a needy person every day**. Thus the ritual of the Ramadan fast can be replaced by the rite of charity.

The religion declares that he who refuses to share his food is outside Islam:

“He who sleeps with a full stomach knowing his neighbour is hungry is not a believer...”

- the Quran describe the pleasures in Paradise awaiting those who “for the love of God offer food to the poor, the orphan and the prisoner...”

Sponsorship of orphans

- Islam pays particular attention to the situation of orphans.
- a number of verses in the Quran demand kindness on their behalf, promising the worst punishment for those who ill-treat them and equally promising the highest rewards for those who look after them.
- The Quran goes so far as to treat a person who oppresses an orphan as a non-believer, in the same way as he who denies the existence of God: *“See the one who denies the religion, then such is the man who repulses the orphan with harshness and does not help feed the poor...”* and *“Those who unjustly use the property of orphans, eat up a fire into their own bodies; they will soon be enduring a blazing fire...”*,
- the Prophet also said, **“God, I firmly condemn he who abuses the rights of these two vulnerable groups: orphans and women...”**

- The Prophet went so far as to promise Paradise to him who sponsors an orphan.

Assistance to refugees

- since its birth Islam has had to deal with refugee situations.

The first refugees it dealt with were those Muslims persecuted by the non-believers in Mecca.

The Prophet told them to take refuge in Abyssinia (Ethiopia). When the persecution reached an unbearable level, the Prophet and his companions decided to emigrate to Medina, where a number of Muslims and sympathisers welcomed them.

The Prophet established a golden rule for the treatment of refugees. He decreed the principle of fraternization between the “ansar” (“helpers”, inhabitants of Medina defending the Prophet’s cause) and the “muhajirun” (“emigrants”, refugees from Mecca).

According to this pact, each “ansar” should take care of one “muhajir”.

This care included food, clothing, shelter and any other assistance needed until the “muhajir” could look after himself.

In a hadith reported by al-Hakim, the Prophet said that God displays his clemency and allows entrance to Paradise for those who give shelter to the poor. - As explained in the part about zakat, “the wayfarer (in distress)” or “the passing stranger” (a definition which applies to a refugee) is one of the eight categories able to benefit from zakat. The religion considers that help given to a refugee is no more than his right: *“And render to the kindred their due rights, as also to those in want and to the traveller (in distress)...”*³⁷

Long-term development projects

In addition to emergency aid and other assistance, the Muslim religion also encourages humanitarian acts which will bring about lasting change in people’s lives.

- There are numerous hadiths on this subject, in one of which, according to Aicha (the Prophet’s wife), the Prophet says: ***“the good work which God likes the best is the one which lasts, even if it is small...”***

- In another hadith he affirms the continuity of the reward even after death: *“When a man dies his works stop bringing him a reward with the exception of three actions: continuous charity,*

a useful science and a pious son who invokes God...” and again *“He who gives alms is rewarded for as long as it is lasting...”*

Long-term actions encouraged by the religion include, for instance, those destined to provide **water and food, and the gift of tools.**

In a hadith the Prophet gave examples of acts whose rewards continue after death, such as **rehabilitating irrigation, sinking a well and planting trees.**

In another he states *“If a Muslim cultivates a plantation he will be rewarded, until the Day of Judgement, every time a human, an animal or a bird eats the fruit of the plantation...”*

The Prophet also promised a lasting reward for the **sinking of wells**: “Whoever digs a well will be rewarded until the Day of Judgement every time a human, a genie or an animal drinks from that well...”

He even promised Paradise to one who dug a well in the Rawma region which suffered from a terrible shortage of water: “He who sinks a well in Rawma will go to Paradise...”

In another statement, the Prophet considered that the best donation to a poor man was a **camel** which gives a lot of **milk** and is on the verge of giving birth. Numerous Muslim humanitarian organizations have developed this type of donation (cows, goats) and the results have been very positive, especially in India, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Somalia, etc.

Micro-credit

Everyone involved in development is unanimous about the effectiveness of micro-credits in eradicating poverty. **Providing a work tool or a credit** that allows the impoverished to start a remunerated activity is a means of tackling the problem at source and avoids assistance without end.

The Prophet stated: *“He who gives a dairy animal (camel, cow) or who gives a loan has the identical reward as one who frees a slave...”* He added: **“Every credit is alms...”**

Other texts invite Muslims to be **forgiving towards a borrower** in difficulty, as in the following hadith: “He who wishes to be spared horrible tests on the Day of Judgement has only to make it easier for the borrower or erase his debts...”

Another text states that “each overdue day is double charity...”

In other citations the Prophet even promised Paradise and escape from the flames of hell as a reward for the Muslim who cancels a debt or prolongs the time allowed for repayment.

Finally, it should be noted that in the Muslim religion there is *no interest payable on loans*.

Waqf

Waqf (continuous alms), according to Muslim tradition, signifies “donating of property or making it available for the benefit of a religious foundation or the common good.

The waqf must be real property or quantifiable riches. This property or wealth (**money, property, shares**, etc.) should yield a continuous lasting profit.

Remember the hadith cited above: *“When a man dies his works stop bringing him a reward with the exception of three actions: continuous charity, a useful science and a pious son who invokes God ...”*

All actions providing a long-term profit are considered continuous alms.

Omar Ibn Khattab (the second Caliph) owned a piece of land to which he was attached, and wanted to donate it. He went to ask the advice of the Prophet, who advised him to block it for the needy: *“If you want you can block the capital and give its fruits as alms. However, the land cannot then be sold, given or inherited by descendants...”*

Some eighty of the Prophet’s companions made similar pledges.

The projects financed by waqf have been very diverse, covering social, humanitarian, cultural and economic domains. They have included the sinking of wells, the construction of water fountains, the construction of homes for the poor unable to pay rent, free hostels and hotels for travellers, the maintenance of bridges and roads, the organization of funerals for the poor, the upkeep of cemeteries, help for the blind, the handicapped and the imprisoned, the financing of weddings for the unmarried poor, the construction and maintenance of orphanages, food centres serving free meals, the construction and maintenance of mosques, and the provision of milk for children.

The most striking examples have been the construction and running of schools and hospitals.

In the health sector, waqf allowed for huge innovations such as mobile hospitals which moved from village to village, as well as emergency teams in places where large meetings were held.

The hospitals offer diverse services, for instance surgery, ophthalmology, traumatology and psychiatry. Each service had a senior doctor, doctors and nurses.

Ramadan campaign

The Muslim community takes the spiritual event of Ramadan as an opportunity to make numerous donations. Many Islamic NGOs also launch **fund-raising campaigns** during that month. Part of the money collected is allocated to food-aid programmes (Ramadan Food Parcels) and the rest is used to finance development programmes.

Money used to be distributed locally but now many people living in distress in developing countries can benefit from it, thanks to the work of the NGOs.

Kurbani operations

For the Feast of Sacrifice, which marks the end of the pilgrimage, dozens of NGOs offer to perform the obligatory rite for believers and worshippers of giving meat to the needy, and distribute tons of meat on their behalf amongst a ggbyvpopulation threatened by famine and malnutrition.

Sponsoring orphans

With the multitude of texts encouraging help for orphans, Islamic NGOs have had no difficulty in promoting and executing programmes to sponsor orphans in the developing countries. The total number of sponsored orphans may well exceed ten thousand for each NGO. The sponsoring programme generally covers their entire needs (food, health, education, social assistance, etc.) and is implemented either collectively in the orphanages or individually on a one to one basis.

Micro-credit

In accordance with the exhortatory texts dealing with this subject, many Islamic NGOs have developed projects – donation of cows, seeds, agricultural material, small industries, etc. – to enable beneficiaries to become self-supporting through income-generating activities.

Waqf

Islamic NGOs did not forget the importance of strategic waqf in devising and carrying out sustainable development projects. Some of them, like Islamic Relief, have even modernized

the mechanisms used. The donor is, for instance, invited to make a donation of one or many shares (at present, a share is valued at 1,300 euros). These shares are invested in low-risk economic and real-estate projects. Annual profits, after deduction of administrative fees, are allocated to humanitarian projects previously selected by the donors. This system has made possible a permanent financing of projects, and thus a durability of humanitarian intervention.

Other alms

As shown above, there are numerous occasions for Muslims to make donations.

Islamic NGOs have therefore created personalized solutions to help donors perform their humanitarian actions. In this way many events (birth of a baby, kaffara, illness or death of a family member, etc.) give rise to a thousand charitable acts which are small but effective because of their great number. Such programmes include digging wells, the financing of surgical operations or the distribution of food parcels, to mention only a few.

Humanitarian work is so broad in scope that fundamental texts can serve as a basis for Islamic NGOs to take up new activities in new situations.

Many of these texts are evolving and can easily be adapted to current events, as suggested in the following examples.

Freeing of slaves

In Islam, combating slavery by dissuasive means has been successful in the past, and Islamic NGOs could easily use the same sources to combat the new forms of slavery today. For instance, a six-year-old Pakistani boy who is compelled to do tapestry work for eighteen hours a day is certainly to be considered a slave. The small 12-year-old Cambodian girl forced by her family to engage in prostitution in order to bring in some extra money can also be considered a slave Mine-clearance operations

The Prophet of Islam has declared that the fact of clearing a path from any obstacle is a sort of alms: to “clear the path from any obstacle is like giving alms.”⁶³ It is the right time to extend this injunction and launch a mine-clearance campaign.

Mediation

NGOs are nowadays being requested to do more in terms of humanitarian assistance and to play a complementary role of advocacy, mediation, conciliation and peace process assistance. The spirit of this can be found in some texts that reflect the same idea. The Prophet of Islam says: “The best alms done by the tongue is the intercession to free prisoners and to avoid a bloodshed between foes...”

ISLAM AND POLITICS

Islam and Governance

1. Discuss the Islamic concept of governance.
2. Assess the challenges of the Islamic concept of governance.

Governance in Islam - Governance is delivery of duties and rights as per policies and thus good governance implies to deliverance of these duties in best manner.

Islam provide guidelines about economic, social, political and governance systems also. Islam advocates for a system of governance which advocates for immunity from **corruption and social injustice**. **Justice** is central in the Islamic concept of governance. Islamic system of good governance is based on Adal meaning justice and its ultimate goal is **welfare of masses**.

>The Qur'an defines good governance as the **rule of justice, ethical order and observance of rights and obligations** in a society. The Qur'an declares:

“Those when given authority in land, establish (system of) salah, give zakah and enjoin what is good (ma'ruf) and forbid what is wrong (munkar).

>It further says:

“O you who believe stand up as a witness for Allah in all fairness, and do not let the hatred of people deviate you from justice (‘adl). Be just, this is closest to piety (I'diluhuwaagrabilittaqwa)”

Basic sources of concept of good governance in Islam are;

1. Models of good governance in **Quran**.
2. Good governance model of **prophet Muhammad** (p.b.u.h).
3. Models of good governance of rightly guided caliphs.

Good Governance in an Islamic Perspective

- ◆ **The principle of justice and fairness** - In the Islamic religion, justice means placing things in their rightful place. It also means giving others **equal treatment**. **Social justice**, means that the government should arrange to meet the **needs** of the citizens of the country.e.g. food, housing and clothing for all the people in the country.
- ◆ Leaders as **responsible trustees of Allah**. - Allah says that to Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on earth. Every human being is a **trustee on earth**. All his possessions, including health, wealth, livelihood, power and status belong to Allah. One who performs his or her duties honestly and diligently is upholding his Trust.
 - Allah calls on the believers to “*...Betray not Allah and His Messenger, nor betray knowingly your Trust [things entrusted to you and all the duties which Allah has ordained for you]*” (8:27).
 - In the light of this concept, no one in authority is **absolute**; one has to remain answerable to his conscience.
- ◆ **Governance and meritocracy**. **Merit** is also one of the important principles of good governance, whereby all appointments in state and non-state organisations are made on the **basis of competence**. In meritocratic societies **performance, competence and ability** determines one’s promotion. Islam encourages Muslims to acquire **knowledge** or higher learning and occupy the best positions in their societies.
 - **leaders must be** competent and capable, worthy of trust – “*Lo Allah commands you that you restore trust to those who are capable and if you judge between mankind, that you judge justly*”.
- ◆ **Servant leadership** - Another important principle of good governance is that the ruler must be sincere and of impeccable (perfect character free from sin) character. He must consider himself not a ruler but a **servant**. Similarly, he should be mindful of his every act, that it should not harm his subjects.
- ◆ **Participation & inclusiveness** – involves effective consultation of subjects in the conduct of public affairs or community development projects.
- ◆ **Transparency** – Transparency is the necessity for **openness** in all public affairs.

Decision making and their enforcement must follow rules, and regulations. Public projects and expenditure must be written down and a financial record of be made open to everyone.

According to Aye transparency entails that: citizens have **a right to available information** pertaining to, for example, **award of contracts, privatization of state enterprises**, rules against corruption or the funding of political parties (Aye, 2000). Transparency deals with extermination of corruption and ensuring a system that is fair, just and based on the rule of law.

No difference between a rich and poor, an official and an ordinary citizen.

- ◆ Care and management of **the environment is a characteristic of good governance**. This involves environmental management and conservation legislation.

- ◆ **Public Accountability** – It is permissible to make the head of state and the head of government **responsible for their acts**. Public leaders must account or be **answerable** and **responsible** either for their good or bad actions and policies. There is no difference between the heads of state and other individuals in the accountability for violating the law. In executing public duties one should be accountable both to Allah and the public. One will be accountable to Allah on the day of judgement. Mohammad said, “*...Lo the hearing and the sight and the heart – of each of these will be asked*”.

Rule of Law – the rule of law in good governance safeguards against cases of corruption, nepotism, injustice, chaos and anarchy in the society. The law should be applied in a uniform manner without any favouritism based on political, economic or social status. No one should be immune to the law.

- ◆ **Consensus Oriented** – crucial decisions are not made or dictated by one man which is dictatorship. Consensus means the making of decisions based on widespread consultations or group consensus or agreement.
- ◆ **Welfare Oriented** – welfare of the people and not of specific interest groups, privileged persons or the ruling class should be the objective of policies. Governance should not seek to satisfy the needs of an individual but the good of the community at large.

Effective and Efficient – Decisions made on time and effectively enforced make the governance good. **Red-tap**, bureaucratic and lengthy process lead to inefficiency and making governance in-effective

CONCEPT OF JIHAD

1. Explore the meaning of Jihad in Islam.
2. Evaluate the importance of a Jihad.

The meaning of the term 'jihad' is controversial, as it derives meaning from the Koran, Hadith and various Islamic scholars:

- **Jihad** means 'to strive or struggle in the way of Allah' (**Munawwir**).
- jihad is to fight the enemy, to devote all the ability and energy in the form of words, deeds or anything, someone could (**Manzur**).
- Jihad is making the fullest efforts, going to greatest lengths, and enduring all the difficulties in the fight against the enemies to resist aggressions, which means an armed battle between two or more countries (**Sabiq**).
- Jihad is fighting the infidels for the purpose of glorifying Islam (**Zuhaili**).
- Jihad means devoting the fullest efforts and ability to get through difficult and serious problems (**Nur**).
- Thus Jihad is 'striving' or 'trying one's utmost' to defend the faith against enemies of Islam and to gain Allah's favour.

Three types of Jihad?

✚ **Internal Jihad or personal jihad** - This type of jihad, called the, is the intimate struggle to purify one's soul of evil influences. It is the struggle to cleanse one's spirit of sin. As with much of the Islamic faith, our journey begins within the heart and soul of the individual. The Islamic faith is guided by what are called the Five Pillars – the thus bringing him/herself closer to Allah through temperate self-control. The Qur'an (the Islamic Holy Book) and the Hadith (the collected sayings of Muhammad) use the word "jihad" to refer to personal struggles:

1. Putting "Allah ahead of our loved ones, our wealth, our worldly ambitions and our own lives."
2. Resisting pressure of parents, peers and society; strive against "the rejecters of faith..." (Quran 25:52)
3. "...strive and struggle to live as true Muslims..."
4. "Striving for righteous deeds."

5. Spreading the message of Islam. "The (true) believers are only those who believe in Allah and his messenger and
6. afterward doubt not, but strive with their wealth and their selves for the cause of Allah. Such are the truthful." (Quran,49:15)

Verbal Jihad: To strive for justice through words and non-violent actions.

Muhammad encouraged Muslims to demand justice in the name of Allah.

When asked: "What kind of jihad is better?" Muhammad replied, 'A word of truth in front of an oppressive ruler!'"

According to the *Institute of Islamic Information and Education*:

"The life of the Prophet Muhammad was full of striving to gain the freedom to inform and convey the message of Islam. During his stay in Makkah [Mecca] he used non-violent methods and after the establishment of his government in Madinah [Medina], by the permission of Allah, he used armed struggle against his enemies whenever he found it inevitable."

In this case the jihad, the struggle, is a social jihad to create a moral and harmonious society that adheres to the tenets of Islam.

✚ **Physical Jihad**, which involves collective armed self-defense, as well as retribution against tyranny, exploitation, and oppression. – this is the jihad that is most closely associated with the concept of a holy war, military jihad. Military action can be used to defend Islam, but not in the way that most people assume. According to Islam, Allah does not ever condone sin. There's no room for interpretation there. So, in order for military violence to be permissible, a number of prerequisites must be met.

Individual obligation or Universal obligation?

Debate whether 'promoting the right and forbidding the wrong' is a moral duty for each **individual**, or only a duty to be fulfilled by a **sufficient number of individuals** within a given society. Most Muslim scholars concur that jihadist ideology has increasingly emphasised the idea that jihad is a universal obligation.

Reasons to justify a jihad?

- justification for jihad in Islam is based on its strong sense of justice and morality, using reasoning such as:
 1. examples from the life of the prophet Muhammad or Islamic history connecting the idea of jihad with the Qur'anic call to "protect the oppressed" or "commanding the right and forbidding the wrong".
 2. since morality is an integral part of what jihad means, any jihad which is based on immoral aims or uses immoral means cannot truly be considered jihad.
- the concept of jihad is itself rooted in the expansionist tendencies of the early Muslim state
- there is greater potential for **immorality** to influence jihad warfare:
 - 1. current global jihadist movement demonstrates that there is no necessary connection between morality and jihad, as many such groups only have the interests of a particular community in mind, not the greater good of the human race
 2. even the prophet Muhammad and his followers fought battles whenever necessary.

Question of universal morals?

One might question the existence of one **correct view of morality** altogether; it is unfair to apply our society's idea of what is just or moral to another's, especially if we are applying such judgement to historically distant communities.

Levels of Jihad

The types or levels of Jihad have been ranked differently in Islamic scholarship:

- Yusuf Qardhawi divided jihad into three levels. First, **jihad against the visible enemies**. Second, **jihad against Satan's temptation** and third, **jihad against worldly lust**.

- Habib Rizieq classified jihad into broad categories encompassing worldly **passions jihad, political jihad, verbal jihad, educational jihad, missionary jihad, worshipping jihad, knowledge jihad, propaganda jihad**, and so forth.
- *Greater jihad vs lesser jihad*==There are different levels of Jihad: **Greater Jihad** the personal spiritual struggle or effort of every Muslim to follow the teachings of Allah (God) in their own lives e.g. overcoming things such as anger, greed, pride and hatred; forgiving someone who has hurt them; working for social justice.

Lesser Jihad the struggle to build a good Muslim society; also Holy War (the struggle to defend against oppression; with force if necessary).

- When the Prophet Muhammad was asked which people fought in the name of Allah, he said: *"The person who struggles so that Allah's word is supreme is the one serving Allah's cause"*.

The Greater Jihad

- ✚ The **five Pillars** of Islam are part of the greater Jihad.
- ✚ Inviting someone to the right path with a sincerity and gentleness is jihad.
- ✚ Making improvements in the areas of education and culture is jihad.
- ✚ Doing the repair or improvement of the economic and social level is jihad.
- ✚ Doing good deeds to parents, children, and wife is jihad.
- ✚ Giving attention to the social life of the community is jihad.
- ✚ Inviting people to the righteousness and forbidding them from digressions is jihad.
- ✚ Treating the non-Muslims who do not fight Muslims is jihad.
- ✚ Even doing good and behaving gently to the animals, plants and natural things is jihad.
- ✚ Learning the **Qur'an by heart**, or engage in other religious study.
- ✚ Overcoming things such as anger, greed, hatred, pride, or malice.
- ✚ Giving up smoking.
- ✚ Cleaning the floor of the mosque.
- ✚ Taking part in Muslim community activities.
- ✚ Working for social justice.

- ✚ Forgive someone who has hurt them.

Greater Jihad Controversy

- The idea of Jihad is often misunderstood. Most Muslim scholars believe that the **internal struggle is the greater jihad**, based on something the Prophet Muhammad said.
- The Prophet is said to have called the **internal Jihad** the "*greater Jihad*".
- On his return from a battle, the Prophet said:

"We are finished with the lesser jihad; now we are starting the greater jihad."

He explained to his followers that fighting against an outer enemy is the lesser jihad and fighting against one's self is the greater jihad (holy war).
- The above quotation is regarded as unreliable by some scholars. They regard the use of jihad as meaning '**holy war**' as the **more important**.

Jihad as Holy War

When Muslims, or their faith or territory are under attack, Islam permits (some say directs) the believer to wage military war to protect them.

However Islamic (Shariah) law sets very strict rules for the conduct of such a war and there is a long tradition of Jihad being used to mean a military struggle to benefit Islam.

What can justify Jihad or Holy War?

The Qur'an makes it clear that Muslims may fight in self-defence but should not start a fight or war.

'Fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you, but begin not hostilities. Lo! Allah loveth not aggressors.'

Qur'an 2:190

Permissible reasons for military Jihad:

- Self-defence
- Strengthening Islam

- Protecting the freedom of Muslims to practise their faith
- Protecting Muslims against oppression, which could include
- overthrowing a tyrannical ruler
- Punishing an enemy who breaks an oath
- Putting right a wrong

‘. Other reasons for a military jihad include: to strengthen Islam; to protect the freedom of Muslims to practice their faith; to protect Muslims against attack; to put right a wrong.

What a Jihad is not?

- ✚ A war is not a Jihad if the intention is to:
- ✚ Force people to convert to Islam
- ✚ Conquer other nations to colonise them
- ✚ Take territory for economic gain
- ✚ Settle disputes
- ✚ Demonstrate a leader's power

A military jihad has to follow strict rules in order to be legitimate:

- The opponent must have started the fighting
- It must not be fought to gain territory
- It must be launched by a religious leader
- It must be fought to bring about good – something that Allah would approve of.
- It must be a last resort – all other ways of solving the problem must have been tried.
- Innocent people should not be killed; women, children or old people should not be killed or hurt.
- Women must not be raped or abused in any way
- Enemies must be treated with justice
- Wounded enemy soldiers must be treated in exactly the same way as one's own soldiers.

- The war must stop as soon as the enemy asks for peace
- Property must not be damaged
- Poisoning of wells is forbidden (chemical or biological warfare might be a modern analogy).

* *'Hate your enemy mildly; he may become your friend one day.'* **Hadith**

* *'But if the enemy incline towards peace, do thou also incline towards peace, and trust in Allah; for He is One that hears and knows allthings.'* **Qur'an 8.61**

The Koran on jihad

The Qur'an has many passages about fighting. Some of them advocate **peace**, while some are very **warlike**. It brings the controversy whether is a religion of peace or violence.

* *'Fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you, but begin not hostilities. Lo! Allah loveth not aggressors.'* **Qur'an 2:190**

* *'To those against whom war is made, permission is given (to fight), because they are wronged; - and verily, Allah is most powerful for their aid.'* **Qur'an 22:39**

* *'Therefore, if they withdraw from you but fight you not, and (instead) send you (Guarantees of) peace, then Allah Hath opened no way for you (to war against them).'* **Qur'an 4:90**

* *'But if the enemy incline towards peace, do thou (also) incline towards peace, and trust in Allah: for He is One that heareth and knoweth (all things).'* **Qur'an 8:61**

ISLAM AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

1. Define forms of conflict in Islam.
2. Explain conflict transformation in Islam.
3. Examine modes of conflict transformation in Islam.

==**Conflict transformation** is about the way that societies deal with moving them from violent to non means. It is the process of resolving disputes and restore peace and good relations in the community.

-- it is peace through the power of communication.

-- Its goal is to build just societies that resolve differences non-violently. To achieve this, it must address the direct and indirect causes of conflict.

-- aimed at establishing individual or communal harmony.

-- conflict transformation is part of jihad since it is a struggle against violence and injustice in society through striving for peace.

Modes of Conflict Transformation

- these are the societally agreed methods and mechanisms for peace building or conflict transformation in Islam.

- these are approaches, methods and principles used in conflict transformation in Islam.

- Islamic precepts are meant to maintain peaceful, healthy, meaningful relationships with God and with all of humanity. This relationship is disrupted by conflicts, whether interpersonal, communal, national or international.

- sources of conflict transformation include the; religious values, traditional rituals of reconciliation, the Koran, Sunnah, hadith, Sharia law, tribal laws, Islamic law, and traditional practices.

- order is restored through the efforts of elders, local leaders, family members, judges and lawyers.

Prophet Muhammad' resolution methods

-- Prophet's conflict resolution and peace-making in three main areas: **1.** Conflict resolution between Muslims and pagans of Mecca; **2.** conflict resolution among Muslims; and **3.** conflict resolution between Muslims and Jews of Medina.

-- According to Kirazli, the approaches, methods and principles of the Prophet in resolving conflicts include: **good intentions and relations, patience, forgiveness, brotherhood, avoidance** (withdrawing), **dialogue, diplomacy, reconciliation (şulh), treaties, mediation, arbitration and coercion**. Prophet Muḥammad, as a leader of the Muslims, was compassionate, patient and tolerant when dealing with conflicts among Muslims.

- Muhammad' principles as recorded in the historical and sacred texts set the basis for conflict resolution among the Muslims.

1. Value of human life (Fitrah)

- Fitrah" emphasizes the value of human life and stresses that all life deserves to be protected regardless of gender, ethnicity and religion. For the mediator to bring warring parties into a dialogue space that supports reconciliation calls on the parties' potential to choose good over evil.

2. **Consultation** - Consulting with others is a principle which Allah the Exalted mentions numerous times in the Quran.

3. **Patience** - The virtue **patience** (Sabr) can be used to define conflict mediation through dialogue. It safeguards mediators from making rushed decisions.

4. **Forgiveness** -One should exercise compassion and forgive others who have done him harm. Quranic principles remind Muslims to forgive each other and work to repair broken relationships by **repenting** and acknowledging wrong-doings. This is illustrated by the Prophet Mohammed, Peace Be Upon Him (PBUH), who sought out a peaceful settlement and eventually **forgave** those of his own Quraysh tribe who had persecuted him and the small Muslim community.

5. **Dialogue** - The Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) has a long tradition of supporting dialogue and peace processes to resolve conflict. Prophet Muhammad heard complains of both sides before passing a verdict.

6. Methods in the Koran

The Qur'an constantly uses the word *Sulha* in resolving all types of conflicts. It means seeking peace, reconciliation, compromise and settlement.

7. **Legal structures and institutions used by the Muslim leaders:** The use of intermediaries

- Other practices could use *tahkeem*, or using **intermediaries** to represent the parties. These intermediaries should be able to represent the parties' position as clearly as

possible to negotiate on their behalf, and guarantee that the parties receive a fair settlement. Methods include;

- Appointment of a **Justice of Peace (Qadi as Sulh)** to oversee the processes of mediation, and reconciliation to achieve settlement and peace. The judge presides over the matter and pass a ruling.
- Parties in conflict have the option of resolving their dispute through a **third-party mediator (Wasta)** who would ensure that all parties are satisfied with the outcome.
- Other practices could use **intermediaries/lawyers (Takkeem)** to represent the parties. These intermediaries should be able to represent the parties' position as clearly as possible to negotiate on their behalf, and guarantee that the parties receive a fair settlement.

MARRIAGE IN ISLAM.

Islam, unlike other religions is a strong advocate of marriage. There is no place for celibacy like, for example the Roman Catholic priests and nuns. The prophet (pbuh) has said "there is no celibacy in Islam.

Marriage is a religious duty and is consequently a moral safeguard as well as a social necessity. Islam does not equal celibacy with high "taqwa" / "Iman". The prophet has also said, "Marriage is my tradition who so ever keeps away there from is not from amongst me".

Marriage acts as an outlet for sexual needs and regulate it so one does not become a slave to his/ her desires.

It is a social necessity because through marriage, families are established and the family is the fundamental unit of our society. Furthermore, marriage is the only legitimate or halal way to indulge in intimacy between a man and a woman.

Islam takes a middle of the road position to sexual relations , it neither condemns it like certain religions, nor does it allow it freely. Islam urges us to control and regulate our desires, whatever they may be so that we remain dignified and not become like animals.

The purpose of Marriage.

The word "zawj" is used in the Qur'an to mean a pair or a mate. In general it usage refers to marriage. The general purpose of marriage is that the sexes can provide company to one another, love to one another, procreate children and live in peace and tranquility to the commandments of Allah.

* Marriage serves as a means to emotional and sexual gratification and as a means of tension reduction. It is also a form of Ibadah because it is obeying Allah and his messenger - i.e. Marriage is seen as the only possible way for the sexes to unite. One could choose to live in sin, however by choosing marriage one is displaying obedience to Allah.

Marriage is "mithaq" - a solemn covenant (agreement). It is not a matter which can be taken lightly. It should be entered into with total commitment and full knowledge of what it involves. It is not like buying a new dress where you can exchange it if you don't like it. Your partner should be your choice for life. One should be mature enough to understand the demands of marriage so that the union can be a lasting one. For a marriage to be valid certain conditions must be met.

- 1) consent of both parties.
- 2) " Mahr" a gift from the groom to his bride.

3) Witnesses- 2 male or female.

4) The marriage should be publicized, it should never be kept secret as it leads to suspicion and troubles within the community.

Is Marriage obligatory?

According to Imams Abu Hanifah, Ahmad ibn Hanbal and Malik ibn Anas, marriage is recommendatory, however in certain individuals it becomes wajib/obligatory. Imam Shaafi'i considers it to be nafl or mubah (preferable). The general opinion is that if a person, male or female fears that if he/she does not marry they will commit fornication, then marriage becomes "wajib". If a person has strong sexual urges then it becomes "wajib" for that person to marry. Marriage should not be put off or delayed especially if one has the means to do so.

A man, however should not marry if he or she does not possess the means to maintain a wife and future family, or if he has no sex drive or if dislikes children, or if he feels marriage will seriously affect his religious obligation.

The general principle is that prophet (pbuh) enjoined up in the followers to marry.

He said "when a man marries, he has fulfilled half of his religion , so let him fear Allah regarding the remaining half." This hadith is narrated by Anas. Islam greatly encourages marriage because it shields one from and upholds the family unit which Islam places great importance.

Selection of a partner:

The choice of a partner should be the one with the most "taqwa" (piety). The prophet recommended the suitors see each other before going through with marriage. It is unreasonable for two people to be thrown together and be expected to relate and be intimate when they know nothing of each other. The couple are permitted to look at each other with a critical eye and not a lustful one. This ruling does not contradict the ayah which says that believing men and women should lower their gaze.

- The couple, however are not permitted to be alone in a closed room or go out together alone. As the hadith says "when a man and a woman are together alone, there is a third presence i.e. shaitan.

- There is no concept of courtship in Islam as it is practised in the west. There is no dating or living in defacto relationship or trying each other out before they commit to each other seriously. There is to be no physical relationship what so ever before marriage. The romantic notions that young people often have, have proven in most cases to be unrealistic and harmful to those involved. We only have to look at the alarming divorce rate in the west to understand this point. e.g. the couple know each other for years, are intimate, live together and so on yet somehow this does not guarantee the success of the future marriage. Romance and love simply do not equal a everlasting bond between two people.

Fact: Romance and love die out very quickly when we have to deal in the real world. The unrealistic expectations that young people have is what often contributes to the failure of their relationship.

- The west make fun of the Islamic way of marriage in particular arranged marriage, yet the irony is that statistically arranged marriages prove to be more successful and lasting than romantic types of courtship.

This is because people are blinded by the physical attraction and thus do not choose the compatible partner.

Love blinds people to potential problems in the relationship. There is an Arabic saying: which says "the mirror of love is blind, it makes zucchini into okra". Arranged marriages on the other hand, are based not on physical attraction or romantic notions but rather on critical evaluation of the compatibility of the couple.

This is why they often prove successful.

Consent of parties.

There is a halal arranged marriage and a haram one. It is OK to arrange marriages by suggestion and recommendation as long as both parties are agreeable. The other arranged marriage is when parents choose the future spouse and the couple concerned are forced or have no choice in the matter.

One of the conditions of a valid marriage is consent of the couple.

Marriage by definition is a voluntary union of two people.

The choice of a partner by a Muslim virgin girl is subject to the approval of the father or guardian under Maliki school. This is to safeguard her welfare and interests. The prophet said "the widow and the divorced woman shall not be married until she has consented and the virgin shall not be married until her consent is obtained. The prophet did revoke the marriage of a girl who complained to him that her father had married her against her wishes.

The husband/wife relationship.

-The wifes rights - the Husbands obligations.

(1) Maintenance

The husband is responsible for the wifes maintenance. This right is established by authority of the Qur'an and the sunnah. It is inconsequential whether the wife is a Muslim , non-Muslim, rich, poor, healthy or sick. A component of his role as "qawam" (leader) is to bear the financial responsibility of the family in a generous way so that his wife may be assured security and thus perform her role devotedly.

The wife's maintenance entails her right to lodging, clothing, food and general care, like medication, hospital bills etc. He must lodge her where he resides himself according to his means. The wife's lodge must be adequate so as to ensure her privacy, comfort and independence.

If a wife has been used to a maid or is unable to attend to her household duties, it is the

The purpose of obedience in the relationship is to keep the family unit running as smoothly as possible. The man has been given the right to be obeyed because he is the leader and not because he is superior. If a leader is not obeyed, his leadership will become invalid -Imagine a king or a teacher or a parent without the necessary authority which has been entrusted to them.

Obedience does not mean blind obedience. It is subject to conditions:

- (a) It is required only if what is asked from the wife is within the permissible categories of action.
- (b) It must be maintained only with regard to matters that fall under the husband's rights.

ISLAM AND MARRIAGE

Meaning of marriage

1. evaluate the meaning of marriage in the Koran.

2. assess the importance of marriage in the Koran.

- **Marriage** is a **contract** between a man and a woman, whom he can legally marry, with the aims of establishing a joint life and procreation. The Arabic term '**zawaj**' ("marriage") stand for association and coming together.

- The term '**nikah**' ("marriage") is defined as "a purposeful contract to obtain and possess an enjoyment."

Marriage or nikah in Islam is a highly religious sacred covenant which legalize sexual intercourse and hence, the procreation of children.

- marriage is a voluntary union of two people.

Importance of Marriage in Islam

1. Completion of fulfilment of faith

- It is a religious requirement, In Islam marriage as an **obligatory act** is so important that it is declared to be one half of single Muslim's faith.

- The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, "**When a man marries, he has fulfilled half of his religion, so let him fear Allah regarding the remaining half.**" Our Holy Prophet Hazrat

Muhammad (PBUH) also married and encouraged others to get married by saying: "**A person who he is able to support a wife and children and does not marry then he is not from us.**"

- Marriage complements one's faith, in the sense that it helps one avoid looking at other women, hence, preserving his chastity. It provides him with a lawful means to fulfill his sexual desire, thus, preventing him from committing adultery. This is crystal clear from the saying of the prophet Muhammad pertaining marriage "**It save one from looking at what one should not, or it prevent one from being involved in adultery.**" (Majah, n. d.)

- Furthermore, there are other negative effects that one can diagnose in a sexual related disease caused by sexual intercourse with multiple partners. (Sayid, 2013) It can be avoided through valid marriage. The prophet PBUH also made it clear that, "**If a Muslim is granted by Allah with a righteous wife, this assists him in preserving half of his (faith). Therefore, he should, fear Allah in respect of the other half.**" (Hakim, 1990)

- Marriage has great importance in Islam, it emphasizes on not to delay in marriage as there is

Another Hadith of Prophet (SAW) related to marriage is: “Do not delay in three things; i) The offering of the compulsory prayer. ii) The offering of the funeral prayer when the dead body is present. iii) The marriage of a woman when her match is found”

2. Marriage makes an incomplete human being a complete one,

- Prophet Muhammad (SAW) says, “**No house has been built in Islam more beloved in the sight of Allah than through marriage**”

3. Marriage is important for reproduction & procreation

- It is necessary for making family (for children). Marriage is an act pleasing Allah Almighty because it is in accordance with his commandments that husband and wife love each other and help each other to make efforts to **continue the human race and raise their children to become true servants of Allah.**

4. Following the example of the Prophet

- Marriage is one of the most liked Sunnah in Islam as Prophet Muhammad married and also encouraged others.

- The importance of the institution or marriage receives its greatest emphasis from the following

Hadith of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), "Marriage is my sunnah. Whosoever keeps away from it is not from me."

5. Happiness and Joy

- Marriage provides tranquillity, peace, and security. It is the source of love and happiness.

- apart from preserving one's faith, marriage help one to attain his worldly happiness which Islam encourages. Faith and happiness are crucial elements of one's personality.

- There is another tradition with similar connotation: "there are four things that bring one joy: a righteous spouse, a commodious house, a religious neighbour and a comfortable means of riding"

6. Establishment of Family

- Marriage is the basic mechanism for establishing family life. No respectable human society could ever exist without family, the fundamental unit of the structure of society.

- Family is the avenue where close relation emerges such as parental and maternal relations, parent and child relation as well as that of sibling's relations.

- In addition to these relations, it also inculcates earnest sense of love and compassion, kindness, care and cooperation in a Muslim.

7. Union between male and female

- Marriage unites man and woman in a dignified manner.
- Allah created all things in a manner that they are dependent on one another of its kind. They could not function independently and need each other's help and assistance in complementing one another. **In the field of electricity, it is necessary for both positive and negative poles to be in contact in order to induce an electric current, hence, yielding light, heat and motion.**

In plants, the production of more plants, fruits and seeds heavily depend on the interaction of pollen grain and a flower's stigma; the former carrying male gametes hence fertilize the later.

These universal laws are highlighted in the following Quranic verses:

We have created all things by pairs that haply ye may contemplate (51:49)

Glorious is Him who has created all the sexual pairs, of that which the earth grows, and of themselves, and of that which they know not. (36:36)

8. Unites families

- marriage is important in boosting social relations in a community.
- Marriage is a bond of love not just only between two persons but between two families.
- Marriage enhances and strengthens social bonds among the individual members of society. For, it expands the range of family by adding new relatives to family structure through inclusion of in-laws and children's aunts and uncles. Thus, through such extension more and more people can enjoy the feelings of love, belonging and social closeness in the society.

Allah views both kinship and marriage relations to be extremely important and encourage the family members to maintain both kinship and marriage relations strongly.

Allah, Exalted be He, says: (And Allah is who has created man from water, and has selected for him relation by blood and relation by marriage; for thy Lord is ever Powerful.) (Al-Furqan, 54).

9. Sense of Responsibility

- Marriage nurtures human character by instilling a sense of responsibility in him and enabling him to bear his responsibility as a husband and a father. In the same manner, marriage inculcates in a woman the sense of responsibility as a wife and a mother.

Unfortunately, some people avoid marriage due to distorted mentality and tendency of not willing to bear their responsibly.

- the significance of marriage represents a strong commitment and a shared responsibility between a man and a woman since their first day together.

- Consequently, Islam also prescribe the obligation of husband towards his wife such as duty of care, avoiding foul language, giving her protection, duty of financial support and etc. Besides that, wife also must perform her obligation towards her husband like being loving and tolerant with her husband, avoiding asking divorce without valid reason and others obligations stated in Qur'an and the tradition of the Prophet PBUH Thus, husband and wife have to take responsibility towards all of these obligations respectively.

10. Marriage ensures the preservation of the human species and continuation of the human race

"O mankind! Be careful of your duty to your Lord, Who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate and from them has spread abroad a multitude of men and women" (Quran: 4:1).

11. Marriage: A Religious Requirement

- Marriage in Islam is a recommended as a religious requirement.

"Marry those among you who are single and (marry) your slaves, male and female, that are righteous" (Quran 24:32)

- Prophet Muhammad declared: "When the servant of Allah marries, he has fulfilled half the (responsibilities laid on him by the) faith; so let him be God conscious with respect to the other half". (Mishkat)

12. Marriage provides a spiritual and legal foundation of the family

"And of His signs is this: He created for you mates from yourself that you might and rest in them, and He ordained between you love and mercy. Lo, therein indeed are portents for folk who reflect". (Quran 30:21)

Through Marriage, the conjugal relationship between a man and a woman becomes lawful. It provides a legitimate outlet for recreation as well as procreation. Islam regards sex as natural and good, but restricts it to the partners of marriage so as to ensure the responsibility for its consequences.

"Your women are a tilth for you so go to your tilth as you will, and send (good deeds) before you for your souls, and fear Allah, and know that you will (one day) meet him. Give glad tidings to believers, (O Muhammad)." (Quran 2:223)

- **Marriage provides spiritual, physical, emotional and psychological companionship.** This companionship generates and sustains love, kindness, compassion, mutual confidence.

- **It lays a spiritual and legal foundation for raising a family.**

The children born of the matrimonial union become legitimate and mutual rights of inheritance are established.

Marriage has also been commended as the way of the prophets.

"We indeed sent messengers before you (O Muhammad), and We assigned them wives and children" (Quran 13:38)

Marriage, in fact, is specifically considered the tradition (sunnah) of Prophet Muhammad

(S) when he declared:

"Marriage is my Sunnah, whoever disregards my (sunnah) path is not from among us".

(ibn Majah)

Islam discourages celibacy and encourages marriage, as Prophet Muhammad (S) recommended:

"Whoever is able to marry, should marry". (Bukhari)

13. Koranic verses which are related to the importance of marriage

There are so many verses in Quran related to the importance of Marriage in Islam and in the sight of Almighty Allah.

- In one place Allah says in Quran: **“O Humans revere your Guardian-Lord, Who created you from a single person created of like nature its mate, and from this scattered (like seeds) countless men and women. Reverence Allah through Whom you claim your mutual rights”** (Quran 4:1). This verse stresses the equality of all humans making it the basis of marriage.

Allah has made partners of all human beings on this earth for making a family.

- The Sunnah of the Prophet Mohammad stated that: **“Men and women are twin halves of each other” (Bukhari)**. This Hadith also emphasizes the fact that men and women are created from a single source. The above underlies the reciprocal nature and the interdependent nature of men and women’s relationship. Conditions of Marriage

Both sides must be free of obstacles to marry and have legal capacity. Their guardians (woman’s father, grandfather, son, brother, uncle, etc. respectively.) must be present at the same time during the proposal and acceptance.

The prohibitions of marriage include the prohibitions about blood and milk kinship must be observed. There must be no other conditions demanded by any of the sides which may prevent the Nikah. The bride and the groom must have reached the age of maturity both the bride and the groom must be chaste.

Benefits of Marriage

Islam defined matters that contain good benefits both in this world and in the Hereafter and among the greatest benefits of marriage are listed below:

By getting married you are obeying the Prophet (SAW) and his Sunnah because our beloved Prophet (PBUH) said: “O young people! Whoever among you is able to marry, should marry.”

(Al Bukhari)

Marriage guarantees physical and spiritual chastity and peace of a person and keeps the couple away from the downfall and trap of the Satan. Allah SWT mentioned in verse about chastity: “And those who guard their chastity (i.e. private parts, from illegal sexual acts)”

(Quran, 23:5).

Through marriage, the couples achieve mutual affection, mercy, and love. Allah (SWT) says:

“And He has put between you affection and mercy” (Quran, 30:21)

With marriage, the couple will have righteous offspring. It is the survival of generation and it results in obtaining great and good rewards by having righteous children

The couples will also gain good rewards while having children, upbringing them in accordance with the Islamic teachings

By marrying and fulfilling the rights of the husband, the believing woman will enter into Paradise

A righteous wife is the better provision of this world. The Prophet (PBUH) said: “This world is but provision, and there is no provision in this world better than a righteous wife.”(Muslim)

Marriage increases sustenance, love, respect, caring, selflessness and forgiving factors between husband and wife

These were some of the benefits of Marriage that we discussed. Islam promotes love, care, and respect in the Muslim society where wife and husband live happily with their children and families. Marriage in Islam teaches both men and women to stay ready to sacrifice and endure for his/her life partner. The main purpose of marriage is protection against a sinful life and living a life according to the teachings of Islam.

Research on Divorce in Islam

ISLAM AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Natural Environment Preservation

1. identify the sources of natural environment practice.
2. examine the principles of environmental preservation in Islam.

What is the Environment?

Thus, when we say “environment,” natural surroundings in which humans and all living creatures live e.g. seas, lakes, rivers, roads, mountains, and forests.

There are more than **750 verses** in the Qur’an that are related to nature.

Fourteen chapters of the Qur’an are named after certain animals and natural incidents, such as: ‘the Cow’, ‘the Cattle’, ‘the Thunder’, ‘the Bee’, ‘the Ant’, ‘the Daybreak’, ‘the Sun’, ‘the Night’, ‘the Fig’ and ‘the Elephant’.

- Moreover, there are many cases in which **God takes an oath** by some

natural phenomena like: ‘the dawn’ (89:1) and ‘the fig and olive’ (95:1). In numerous verses, the Qur’an states that all the **natural phenomena have awareness of God and glorify God**:

- And We made the mountains and the birds to celebrate our praise along with David. (21:79& 38:18)

And there is not a thing but that it glorifies Him with His praise but you do not understand their glorification. (17:44)

- In many verses the **natural phenomena** are characterised as **divine signs** indicating the knowledge, the wisdom and the power of God, such as:

Most surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day, and the ships that run in the sea with that which profits men and the water that God sends down from the cloud, then gives life with it to the earth after its death and spreads in it all (kinds of) animals, and the changing of the winds and the clouds that are made subservient between the heaven and the earth, there are signs for a people who understand. (2:164)

Water. In Islamic culture, water is very highly regarded. The word ‘maa’ (**water**) is used in the Qur’an about **60 times**. Water is introduced as the **origin** and the **source of life**. For example, the

Qur’an says: ‘*And We have made of water everything living*’ (21:30).

The Qur'an (24:45) also states that *God created from water every animal* that goes on its belly, on two legs and on four legs. Water is **pure and purifying** (25:48). Imam Sadiq said: 'Surely **God made the earth pure as**

He made the water pure'.

A Muslim who wants to **perform ritual prayer** or to touch the Holy Qur'an or to circumambulate (circle) around the Ka'bah in Mecca must be ritually pure and to be ritually pure he needs to make **ritual ablution with water**. In Islamic symbolism, water normally stands for knowledge and faith or even for Imams.

Water must be kept pure and clean. For example, Imam Baqir is quoted as saying: '*Do not urinate in water!*'

Earth. Every Muslim in his ritual prayer has to **prostrate to God several times on the earth** (or an earthly material like soil or sands). If water is not available or using water is harmful to one's health (e.g. because of injury), one needs to use earth or **earthly materials** in a special way to **perform ritual ablution**.

In Islamic scriptures, the earth is introduced as an **origin for the creation** of human beings. The Qur'an says:

From it (earth) We created you and into it We shall send you back and from it We will raise you a second time. (20:55)

Likewise, the earth is introduced as '**a mother' for human beings**.

-The Holy Prophet is quoted as saying:

Preserve the earth because it is your mother.

The Islamic View of the Environment

- according to Islam, everything in the universe is created by God. God causes and controls the movement and operation of the universe and all creation.

Mankind are Allah's trustees on earth. The universe has been entrusted to mankind to preserve and protect.

As God's trustees on earth, at the Last Judgement man will be called to account for how he acted towards the trust, and how he treated the environment.

The earth is also considered by Islam to be a place of purification and worship of God. God's Messenger (PBUH) said: *"The earth was made a place of worship and purification for me [and Muslims]."*

God's Messenger (PBUH) was emphasising this point when he said:

"God is beautiful and He loves the beautiful; He is generous and loves generosity; He is clean and loves cleanliness."

In Islam mankind should attach the greatest importance to cleanliness and purity, physical and particularly moral and spiritual.

The Importance of Cleanliness

Islam considers cleanliness to be one of the fundamentals of belief. It thus makes a direct connection between belief and cleanliness. It is because of this that throughout the ages cleanliness has been one of the Muslims'

most striking characteristics. In one Hadith, God's Messenger (PBUH) says: *"Cleanliness is half of belief."*

Muslims should neglect neither the cleanliness of their surroundings, houses, the roads they use, and parks and gardens, nor any sort of moral and spiritual cleanliness.

The Qur'an says:

O you who believe! When you prepare for prayer, wash your faces, and your hands [and arms] to the elbows; rub your heads [with water]; and [wash] your feet to the ankles. If you are in a state of ceremonial impurity, bathe your whole body...

The Qur'an therefore commands that at least five times a day we wash those parts of the body that may become dirtied like the hands, face, nose, ears, mouth, neck, head, and feet, and that we keep them clean.

The place the prayers are to be performed also has to be clean, as well as the clothes worn.

For instance, he was always careful when going to the mosque or to visit someone or when being in the company of others to wear clean and presentable clothes, to rub fragrant scents on himself, and not to eat things like onion and garlic which would be unpleasant to others.

the most important condition for protecting ourselves against illness is being clean and living in a clean environment. Qur'an:

God loves those who turn to Him constantly and He loves those who keep themselves pure and clean.

Not Wasting the Earth's Resources

- A further important Islamic principle related to the environment is the Islamic **prohibition concerning thoughtless consumption**; that is, **wastefulness** and **extravagance**. Wastefulness is not only the thoughtless consumption of

natural resources; it is at the same time **disrespectful towards God**, the Creator and Owner of all the bounties.

- Extravagance and over-consumption will affect not only ourselves, but forthcoming generations.

In the Holy Qur'an, God says:

Verily We have created all things in proportion and measure. If we keep this in mind, we see that carefully preserving the balance and measure is a human obligation. The science of ecology shows us that the universe contains extremely sensitive eco systems and balances, and that man has therefore to maintain these ecological systems.

Islam permits utilization of the environment, but this should not be arbitrary. Wastefulness and extravagance are prohibited by God:

O children of Adam! Wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer; eat and drink, but waste not by excess, for God loves not the wasters.

- The elements that support life should be conserved so that they can be utilized continuously.

- God's Messenger (PBUH) also attached great importance to **water**, and **forbade the excessive use** of it even when taking the **ablutions**, saying that to do so was 'detestable' (makruh). He thus prevented people using too

much water even for something like ablutions, when they are preparing to enter the Divine presence and court.

- A Hadith about this is the following: "God's Messenger (PBUH) appeared while Sa'd was taking the ablutions. When he saw that Sa'd was using a lot of water, he intervened saying: 'What is this? You are wasting water.' Sa'd replied asking: 'Can there be wastefulness while taking the ablutions?' To which God's Messenger replied:

"Yes, even if you take them on the bank of a rushing river."

some matter in which the above statements are not applicable? That is, if wastefulness

The Qur'an and Sunna stipulating that **water is the basis of life** lays a number of obligations and responsibilities on Muslims: the **conserving** of existent water supplies in the best possible way; the **prevention of any activity** that might lead to the pollution of water sources or spoil the purity and characteristics of the water; **never adopting an extravagant** and irresponsible attitude in the consumption of water; **rational and regular utilization** of water and water sources.

- God's Messenger (PBUH) was emphasizing when he said: *"Even if you take the ablutions in a flowing river, do not waste the water,"*