

**A GUIDE TO ISLAM: AN ADVANCED LEVEL
TEXTBOOK ON ISLAM**

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Second edition 2019

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Foreword

This publication is a resource for the Islamic section of the Advanced Level Family and Religious Studies syllabus. It provides authentic and verified information about Islam from the primary sources and secondary sources of the religion. I have engaged in extensive research and presented the book in a simple and clear style. I have adequately addressed all areas of the syllabus. The book is beneficial for anyone who is interested in studying Islam, and its benefit is not limited to the Advanced Level learners and teachers.

Islam is a relevant and interesting area of study. Unfortunately, at times it has been a victim of misinformation, disinformation, myths, and deliberate distortions. Therefore, it is imperative to provide authentic information about the various aspects of Islam from bona fide, and verifiable primary and secondary sources. This is what I have endeavoured to do in this book.

Shaibu Asali

Introductory chapter

Objectives

By the end of this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Explain the origins of Islam.
- Define Islam linguistically and technically.
- Evaluate the importance of the crescent and the star in Islam.
- Evaluate the importance of the Islamic calendar.

An introduction to Islam

Islam is the second largest religion in the world today after Christianity. There are more than 1.6 billion Muslims in the world. Therefore, a quarter of the world's population are adherents of Islam. It is also the world's fastest growing religion, and the Pew Research Center estimates that by 2075, the Muslims will be the largest religion in the world. Islam is highly visible in Africa, and it is very prevalent in North and West Africa. Although the Arabs are strongly linked with Islam, they comprise only twenty percent of the total Muslim population (Berkely Centre). Indonesia has the largest number of Muslim with over 200 million people there professing the religion. A large number of Muslims are in the Indian subcontinent, and Asia. The rest of the Muslims are scattered in various countries on the globe, and it is highly unlikely that there is a country which does not have Muslims.

The definition of Islam:

The linguistic meaning: In the Arabic language, the word Islam means submission. (*Lisaan al-Arab*, 12/291).

The technical meaning: Islam means submission to the Oneness of Allah (God) (Zarabozo, 2007). This simply means obeying Allah, doing what Allah wants and abstaining from what He prohibited.

By extension, this definition means that all the true prophets of the past like Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus (peace be upon them), and others were Muslims because they all submitted to Allah. Therefore, from an Islamic point of view, Muhammad (peace be upon him) is not the founder of Islam. Rather, Islam originated from Allah, and it existed before the birth of Muhammad (peace be upon him), and the previous prophets were all Muslims.

Note: It is an Islamic injunction that whenever the name of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is mentioned, a Muslim should invoke God to bless the Prophet (peace be upon him) by uttering the phrase “peace be upon him.” This practice is also adopted after writing the Prophet’s name (peace be upon him). Likewise, the phrase is used after mentioning or writing the names of the other prophets.

Does the word Islam means peace?

A common misconception is to translate the word Islam to mean peace. However, as Zarabozo (2007), pointed out, while “it is true that the Arabic word for “peace” (salaam) comes from the same root as the word Islam, it is also very true that true peace—both internally and externally—can only be the result of the correct implementation of Islam. At the same time, though, it should be very clear in the minds of every Muslim that his religion being Islam represents his commitment and devotion to worshipping and submitting to Allah alone. This should become the essence of what the individual Muslim is all about.”

Does Islam have a symbol?

The crescent and the star have been purported to be symbols of Islam. However, there is no basis for this belief as it is not supported by evidence from the Islamic sources. This symbol was not used during the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), or the reign of his successors (the caliphs), or the Umayyad Dynasty. Historians have differed as to when this symbol first appeared, and who first used it. In *at-Taraateeb al-Idaariyyah* (1/320), al-Kittaani pointed out that some scholars argued that this symbol was first used by the Persians, while other scholars indicated that it was first used by the Greeks, and later on adopted by the Muslims. In the Ottoman Empire, the crescent and the star became strongly associated with Islam, as the rulers adopted these symbols, and used them widely.

The Islamic calendar

An important aspect to any student of Islam is knowledge about the Islamic calendar. This calendar differs from the Gregorian calendar in that it is based on sighting the crescent. So, when the new moon is born and sighted, the Islamic month begins. Therefore, the Islamic month consists of twenty-nine or thirty days, and it can never be thirty-one days. Consequently, the Islamic calendar is ten days shorter than the Gregorian calendar. The

Islamic calendar is dated from the year in which Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emigrated to Medina from Mecca. It is known as the Hijri calendar. The letter H is mentioned after the year. So, writing 3 H would mean three years after Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) migration to Medina. This year, 2019 corresponds to 1440 H in the Islamic calendar.

The Muslim calendar consists of the following months:

1. Muharram
2. Safar
3. Rabi-ul-Awwal
4. Rabi-al-Akhir
5. Jamad-ul-Ula
6. Jamad-ul-Ukhra
7. Rajab
8. Sha'ban
9. Ramadan (the month of fasting)
10. Shawwaal
11. Thul-Qa'dah
12. Thul-Hijjah

Questions

1. "Islam means peace." Discuss
2. Evaluate the importance of the crescent and the star in Islam.
3. Discuss the importance of the Hijri calendar in Islam.

Chapter One: Authority of the Quran

Objectives

By the end of this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Explain the nature of the Quran.
- Evaluate the importance of the Quran in Islam.
- Explain the nature of the Sunnah.
- Evaluate the importance of the Sunnah in Islam.

Definition of the Quran:

The linguistic definition: Qadhi (1999) stated that popular linguistic meaning is that which was chosen by a scholar of the earlier times, ibn Jareer at-Tabari who indicated that the linguistic meaning of the word Qur'an is to read and recite.

The technical definition: Ad-Dumayri 1996 (2016) argued that the best definition for the Qur'an is that which states: "It is the word of Allah which was revealed on Prophet Muhammad. It is inimitable in its words and meaning. Its recitation is an act of worship, and it was transmitted to us through an established series of reliable transmitters. It is written in books from the beginning of *Surah al-Faatiḥah* (the opening chapter of the Qur'an) to the end of *Surah an-Naas* (the last chapter of the Qur'an)."

The gradual revelation of the Quran

The Qur'an was gradually revealed to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) through the angel Gabriel over a period of twenty-three years. Thus, the verses were revealed according to the need and circumstances of the people. The gradual revelation of the Qur'an helped in transforming the society towards the laws which are in line with Islam because gradual change is more effective than sudden change. This revelation by degrees also made it easy for Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the Muslims to memorize the Qur'an, and apply it in their daily lives.

The nature of the Quran

The Qur'an is divided into 114 chapters which are called Surahs. Thus, one chapter of the Qur'an is known as a Surah. The Quran is also divided into 30 parts which are known as *ajzaa'* and one part is called *juz*.

The first verses to be revealed from the Quran were the first five verses in Chapter 96 of the Qur'an which is *Surah al-'Alaq* (the chapter of the clot), and they state: “ **Read! In the name of your Lord, who has created (all that exists). He created man, out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood. Read and your Lord is Most Honorable. Who has taught (the writing) by the pen. Has taught man that which he knew not.**” These verses show the importance of education in Islam because they instruct people to read. Therefore, Muslims are referred to as “the nation of reading”.

According to the majority of the scholars, the last verse to be revealed from the Qur'an was verse 281 from the second chapter of the Quran, *Surah al-Baqarah* (the chapter of the cow) which states: “**And fear a Day when you will be returned to Allah . Then every soul will be compensated for what it earned, and they will not be treated unjustly.**”

The Meccan and the Madinite Surahs

A significant division of the Qur'an is its division into Meccan and Madinite Surahs. This is because the chapters which are known as the Meccan Surahs have characteristics which are distinct from the Madinite Surahs.

The Meccan Surahs were revealed before Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) migration from Mecca, his birthplace to Medina, where Islam was established and spread to the rest of the world. The Madinite Surahs were revealed after the migration of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

The characteristics of the Meccan Surahs

Qadhi (1999) and other scholars indicated that the Meccan Surahs had the following characteristics:

1. Invitation to the sincere worship of one true God (*Tawheed*), and rejecting the worship of idols and false deities.
2. Discussion of issues of creed relating to believing in prophets, angels, the divine scriptures which God revealed in the past, the day of Judgement, reward and punishment, Heaven and Hell.
3. Stories of the previous prophets and the problems they encountered in their mission, and the obstacles the believers of the past encountered, and the punishments that were meted out to them by the disbelievers.
4. The Meccan Surahs consisted of short verses and the chapters are shorter than the Madinite Surahs

The characteristics of the Madinite Surahs

The chapters which were revealed after Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) emigration to Medina consisted of the following:

1. A detailed discussion of the rituals and laws of worship pertaining to prayer, charity, fasting and pilgrimage.
2. Laws regulating the individual, the family, and the society.
3. A discussion of the machinations of the hypocrites who were prevalent in Medina.
4. The Madinite Surahs were longer chapters, and they had verses which were longer than the Meccan Surahs.

The major theme of the Quran

The major theme of the Quran is the Oneness of God (*Tawheed*). All the verses of the Qur'aan deal with Tawheed in one of the following ways:

- a) Commands and duties are prescribed by God, and these emphasise God's Oneness which is achieved by obeying them.
- b) Prohibitions in matters which are proscribed by God, and abstaining from them accentuate God's Oneness.
- c) Stories of the nations of the past indicate Tawheed whereby those who followed the prophets of the foretimes, and obeyed God, achieved God's Oneness and they were successful. On the other hand, those who did not internalize Tawheed by disobeying God, and rejecting the prophets were destroyed. These stories also serve as lessons and reminders for the Muslims of the present times.

The other themes of the Qur'aan were mentioned above under the characteristics of the Meccan and the Madinite Surahs.

The significance of the Quran

The Quran is the central book in the life of a Muslim. It is the constitution upon which his or her life is based. It controls the Muslim in all aspects of life. The Quran has pronouncements on creed, worship, transactions, judicial issues, and international relations. Muslims believe that although the Quran was revealed more than one thousand four hundred years ago, it is relevant for all times and places, and it will remain like that until the day of Judgement.

The Quran is also vital in that it changed the lives of the Arabs when it was revealed. The Arabs were steeped in idolatry, adultery, plunder, all sorts of crimes, internecine wars, and

they were ungovernable. However, the Quran gradually removed all these traits from the Arab society such that by the time Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) died the lives of the Arabs were completely changed. Likewise, the Quran continues to change the lives of people on a daily basis.

Moreover, the Quran is the most widely-read book on the earth today. Muslims recite the Quran in the five daily compulsory prayers. It is also recited in the various optional prayers which are performed daily. Furthermore, it is recommended for Muslims to recite the Quran every day outside prayer.

The primary source of reference in Islam is the Noble Quran. If a Muslim wants to know about God's ruling on any aspect of life, then he or she has to refer to the Quran first. Every issue of life is expounded in the Quran. God says: "**We have neglected nothing in the Book**" [Quran: 6 v 38].

The miraculous nature of the Quran

In Islam, the Quran is regarded as being miraculous in terms of its language, composition, arrangement, and message. It is the best book ever in Arabic literature. The Quran was revealed at a time when the Arabs were known for their literary prowess, and excellence in poetry, and the spoken word. However, they were dumbfounded by the Quran, and they could not match it in any form or manner. Moreover, Allah challenged the people who had doubts about the Quran to author a chapter which is similar to the Quran but they could not do so. The challenge still stands today, and there are no takers. God said: "**And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down upon Our Servant [Muhammad], then produce a *Surah* the like thereof and call upon your witnesses other than Allah , if you should be truthful. But if you do not - and you will never be able to - then fear the Fire, whose fuel is men and stones.**" [Quran: 2 v 24].

The Sunnah

The definition of the Sunnah

A discussion of the Noble Quran would be incomplete without discussing the Sunnah, and its authority in Islamic legislation. Linguistically, Lane (1984) defined the Sunnah as "a way, course, rule or manner of acting, or conduct of life or the like." Zarabozo indicated that the technical definition of Sunnah as provided by the scholars of hadeeth (the Prophetic tradition) is: "what has been passed down from the Prophet (peace be upon him) of his statements, actions, tacit approvals, manners, physical characteristics, or biography."

The link between the hadeeth and the Sunnah

The hadeeth is closely linked to the Sunnah. At times, these words are used interchangeably. Linguistically, the word hadeeth refers to several things like: new, recent, existing, information, a piece of information, an announcement, etcetera. Zarabozo stated that the technical meaning of hadeeth is: “any report of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), saying, action, tacit approval, manners, physical characteristics, or biographical data. In other words, it is any report about the Sunnah as defined by the scholars of hadeeth.”

The importance of the Sunnah

The Sunnah is important for the following reasons

1- It is an original source of reference for Islamic Law. A Muslim first looks for the Islamic ruling of anything in the Quran. If he cannot find it there, then he looks for it in the Sunnah. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: “*I have been given the Quran and something like it.*” [Sunan Abi Dawood, hadeeth number 4604].

2- The Sunnah explains the rulings of the Quran in detail. Sometimes, the Quran gives a general command like: “**Establish prayer**” [Quran 2: 43]. The details pertaining to the conditions of prayer, the prescribed times, the clothing, and so on are then explained in detail in the Sunnah.

3- The Sunnah captures the details of the life of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and he is a role model whom the Muslims are instructed to follow. The Quran states: “**Indeed in the Messenger of Allah (Muhammad peace be upon him) you have a good example to follow.**” [Quran 33: 21]. So, if a Muslim does not know about the life of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) through the Sunnah, he will not be able to follow him.

The recording of hadeeth

The details of the Sunnah were recorded in hadeeth. Since, hadeeth is important in terms of Islamic legislation, it is essential to trace the history of the recording of hadeeth. Recording of hadeeth started during the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Some of the Prophet’s companions like Abdullah ibn Amr recorded hadeeths during this era. Many other companions preserved hadeeths through memorization as was the case of Abu Hurayrah who memorized thousands of hadeeths, and became the most prolific narrator of hadeeths. Over time, it became imperative to expand the practice of preserving hadeeths through recording especially considering that the memorizers of hadeeths were scattered over different areas, and their deaths could lead to the loss of crucial religious knowledge.

The various stages of hadeeth compilation were summarized into ten stages by Kamali (2002). These stages were as follows:

1) The *Sahifa* (this literally means booklet): The *Sahifas* represented the earliest stage in the collection of hadeeths. Hadeeths were compiled for personal use without any regard for order or classification. The Sahaba (companions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) who were known for possessing *Sahifas* included Sa'd ibn Ubadah, Abdullah ibn Abi Awfa, Jabir ibn Abdillah, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib. This practice was continued by the students of the Sahaba, and those who came after them like Abdullah ibn Abbas, Sa'eed ibn Jubayr, and Hammaam ibn Munabbih.

2. The *Musannaf* collections: These consist of hadeeths classified according to themes. These collections gained currency in the middle of the second Hijri century. The well-known *Musannafs* of that time included the *Muwatta'* of Imam Malik, the *Musannaf* of 'Abd ar-Razzaaq, and the *Musannaf* of Ma'mar ibn Rashid.

3. The *Musnad* compilations whereby all the hadeeths narrated by a companion of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) were put under his name regardless of the subject matter. The most famous book in this category is the *Musnad* of Imam Ahmad which contains 40 000 hadeeths. Other *Musnads* were the *Musnad* of ibn an-Najjar, and the *Musnad* of Aboo Dawood Sulaymaan ibn Dawood at-Tayaalisi.

4. The *Saheeh* collections consist of authentic narrations. The most famous collection in this regard is *Saheeh al-Bukhaari* by Imaam al-Bukhaari. His book is considered to be the most authentic book after the Quran. Other *Saheehs* were the *Saheeh Muslim*, and *Saheeh ibn Hibbaan*.

5. The *Sunan* collections consist of compilations which focus on legal hadeeths. Thus, the hadeeths concern rules about cleanliness, prayer, alms (poor-due), hajj (pilgrimage), ritual prayer, marriage, divorce, business dealings, and so forth. The famous *Sunan* include the *Sunan* of Aboo Dawood, the *Sunan* of an-Nasaai, and the *Sunan* of ibn Maaajah.

6. The *Jaami'* collections represented a broad range of topics like creed, legal rules, heart softeners, social etiquette, exegesis of the Quran, virtues of the Prophet and his companions, crises, and so on. The famous *Jaami's* include the *Jaami'* of at-Tirmithi.

7. The *Mu'jam* collections are books of hadeeths where the contents appear in alphabetical order under the names of the narrators, and their teachers, or the cities where the narrators hailed from. Examples of this are *Mu'jam at-Tabaraani*, the two *Mu'jams* of as-Suyooti entitled *Haatib Layl wa Jaarif Sayl*, and *Zaad al-Maseer fee al-Fihrist as-Saghaair*.

8. *Al-Mustadrak* compilations are collections of hadeeth which supplemented the work of previous scholars. A famous example is the *Mustadrak* of al-Haakim.

9. *Al-Mustakhraj* collections are compilations of hadeeth whereby a later scholar collects new chains of transmission for the same hadeeths which were previously compiled by

earlier scholars. These include the *Mustakhraj* of Aboo Bakr ibn Ibraaheem al-'Isfaraaini on *Saheeh Muslim*.

10. *Al-Juz'*: This refers to a book or compilation of hadeeths where the hadeeths are narrated by a single narrator from the Sahaabah. For example, the hadeeth which were narrated by Aboo Bakr are gathered in one compilation which is called *Juz Abi Bakr*.

Questions

1. "The Quran is the constitution of the Muslims." Discuss.
2. Evaluate the major themes of the Quran.

3. Assess the link between the Quran and the Sunnah.

Chapter Two: The concept of Allah

Objectives

By the end of this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Explain the concept of Allah
- Identify the attributes of Allah

The meaning of the word Allah

In Arabic, the word Allah refers to the Supreme Being who deserves worship. This name is usually translated as God. Islam is a monotheistic religion which worships one true God. Due to the fact that Muslims prefer to refer to God as Allah, some people mistakenly believe that Muslims pray to another being other than Allah. Dr. Zakir Naik, a Muslim scholar of comparative religion pointed out that Muslims prefer to use the name Allah because it cannot be adulterated and used to refer to other beings beside the Supreme Being. Therefore, whenever the term Allah is used it refers to one true God. The word Allah is central to Islam, and it was mentioned 2724 times in the Quran. (Assyyid, 2014).

The concept of the monotheistic God in Islam

Islam believes that God is one. This concept is known as *Tawheed* (the Oneness of God). Based on evidences from the Quran and the Sunnah (the teachings of Muhammad also known as the Prophetic Tradition), Muslim scholars have divided the concept of monotheism into three categories which are as follows:

***Tawheed ar-Rububiyah* (Oneness in Lordship)**

This involves affirming that Allah is One, and He has no partners in His sovereignty. This concept was expounded by Philips (2005) who stated: “This category is based on the fundamental concept that Allah alone caused all things to exist when there was nothing. He sustains and maintains creation without any need from it or for it, and He is the sole Lord of the universe, and its inhabitants.” This concept is supported by many verses of the Quran including Quran 39 verse 62 which states: “**Allah is the Creator of everything and He has charge over everything.**”

***Tawheed al-Asmaa wa as-Sifaat* (Oneness in Names and Attributes)**

This is affirming that Allah’s names and attributes are unique and incomparable. Islamically, Allah is referred to by the names and attributes with which He and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) used. Therefore, no new names and attributes can be invented, fabricated or attributed to Allah. The golden rule in dealing with Allah’s Names and Attributes is contained in the Qur’anic verse which states: “**There is nothing like Him, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.**” [Quran 42 verse 11]

Verses which discuss Allah's Attributes include the following:

1. **"... My Mercy encompasses all things. That (Mercy) I shall ordain for those who are the pious..."** [Quran 7:156]
2. **"And verily, I am indeed Forgiving to him who repents, believes (in My Oneness, and associates none in worship with Me) and does righteous good deeds, and then remains constant in doing them (till his death)."** [Quran 20:82]
3. **"He Who takes charge of every person and knows all that he has earned."** [Quran 13:33]
4. **"Allah is the Wali (Protector or Guardian) of those who believe. He brings them out from darkness into light..."** [Quran 2:257]
5. **"And it is He Who originates the creation, then will repeat (after it has perished)..."** [Quran 30:27]

Tawheed al-Uloohiyyah (Oneness in worship)

This is affirmation that only God has to be worshipped. Therefore, no other being is worshipped by Muslims. God alone rewards those who worship Him, and punishes those who transgress against His limits. The purpose for the creation of mankind is to worship God as is stated by the Quran. It states: **"And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me."** [Quran 51:56]

Some of the verses which discuss *Tawheed al-Uloohiyyah* (Oneness in worship) include the following:

1. **"And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him."** [Quran 17:23]
2. **"Worship Allah and join none with Him (in worship)."** [Quran 4:36]
3. **"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah , [being] sincere to Him in religion, inclining to truth, and to establish prayer."** [Quran 89: 5]
4. **" O you who believe! Bow down, and prostrate yourselves, and worship your Lord and do good that you may be successful."** [Quran 22:77]
5. **"Say, "Indeed, my prayer, my rites of sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allah, Lord of the worlds."** [Quran 6:162]

***Shirk*, the negator of the concept of Tawheed**

The concept of *Tawheed* is negated by *shirk* which is polytheism or associating partners with Allah in His Lordship, worship, and names and attributes. *Shirk* is prohibited by the texts of the Quran and the Sunnah, and some of them are as follows:

“Then do not set up rivals unto Allah (in worship) while you know (that He Alone has the right to be worshipped).” [Quran 2:22]

“And they set up rivals to Allah, to mislead (men) from His path! Say: ‘Enjoy (your brief life)! But certainly, your destination is the (Hell) Fire!’” [Quran 14:30]

In the hadeeth it is narrated that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: “*Whoever dies claiming that Allah has a rival, will enter Hell.*” [Narrated by al-Bukhaari, hadeeth number 4497, Muslim, hadeeth number 92.]

The scholars classified *shirk* into two major types:

a) *Shirk akbar* (major shirk): This is the major type of polytheism which takes a person out of the fold of Islam, and it involves ascribing partners to Allah in any manner or form whether that is in His Lordship, worship, or names and attributes.

b) *Shirk asghar* (minor *shirk*): This includes everything that may lead to major shirk, or which is described in the texts as being shirk, but does not reach the extent of being major *shirk*, and does not make a person lose his faith. However, minor *shirk* is considered to be a major sin.

The Attributes of Allah

In Islam, the belief is that Allah is the Supreme Being. Therefore, a Being must have attributes and names. However, the belief in Allah’s attributes and names is closely linked to the belief in Allah’s Being. Therefore, what is known about Allah’s names and attributes is based on what was revealed in the Quran and the Sunnah. This is similar to Allah’s Being whereby all that is known by humans concerning that is from what Allah stated in the Quran or what was stated by Prophet Muhammad in the Sunnah.

The difference between Allah’s names and attributes

The names of Allah refer to Allah Himself and also refer to one of His perfect attributes that exist in Him, such as *al-Qaadir* (the All-Powerful), *al-‘Aleem* (the All-Knowing), *al-Hakeem* (the Most Wise), *as-Samee’* (the All-Hearing), *al-Baseer* (the All-Seeing). These names refer to Allah Himself and to His different qualities of knowledge, wisdom, hearing, and sight. So the names refer to two things, while attributes refer to one thing. Scholars stated that the name includes the attribute and the attribute implies the name.

Therefore, Allah's names give us an idea about His attributes. Allah states: **“And to Allah belong the best names, so invoke Him by them. And leave [the company of] those who practice deviation concerning His names. They will be recompensed for what they have been doing.”** [Quran 7: 180].

Does Allah have ninety-names only?

The hadeeth which states: *“Allah has ninety-nine names, one hundred less one. Whoever learns them will enter Paradise,”* [Al-Bukhaari (2736) and Muslim (2677)] has been interpreted by some scholars like ibn Hazm to limit Allah's names and by extension his attributes to ninety-nine. However, this view was contradicted by the majority of the scholars because other hadeeths indicate that Allah has unlimited names and attributes. An authentic narration states that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: *“There is no one who is afflicted by distress and grief, and says: “O Allah, I am Your servant, son of Your servant, son of Your female servant; my forelock is in Your hand, Your command over me is forever executed and Your decree over me is just. I ask You by every name belonging to You which You have named Yourself with, or revealed in Your Book, or You taught to any of Your creation, or You have preserved in the knowledge of the Unseen with You, that You make the Quran the life of my heart and the light of my breast, and a departure for my sorrow and a release for my anxiety”,’ but Allah will take away his distress and grief, and replace it with joy.”* He was asked: *“O Messenger of Allah, should we learn this?”* He said: *“Of course; everyone who hears it should learn it.”* [Ahmad, hadeeth number 3704]. So, the first hadeeth of the ninety-nine names does not limit Allah's names to that number. Rather, it indicates that whoever memorizes ninety-nine names of Allah, and acts according to them will enter Paradise. This was what was stated by scholars like an-Nawawi.

A discussion of some of Allah's attributes

I will discuss a number of Allah's attributes which are mentioned in the Qur'aan and the Sunnah

1. The One to whom belongs the dominion (*Allathi lahu al-mulk*)

This attribute is mentioned in the following verse:

a) **“The One who has the dominion of the heavens and the earth. And Allah is Witness over everything.”** [Qur'an 85: 9]

As-Si'di indicated that this attribute describes Allah as being the Master and Owner of the universe. This describes His grandeur, glory, majesty, omnipotence, governance, and regulation of all affairs. Everything is owned by Him, and it is subservient to Him, and in constant need of Him.

2. The One (*al-Aḥad*)

Allah is described as the One in Quran 112 verse 1 which states: “**Say, "He is Allah , [who is] One.**”

This attribute means that Allah is One Being. He is unique in all aspects of perfection, and all forms of worship must be directed to Him alone.

3. The All-Wise (*Al-Hakeem*)

Allah said: “**And He is the All-Wise, Well-Acquainted with all things.**” [Quran 6: 18].

The word is *al-Hakeem* is derived from *al-hikmah* which means wisdom. In Arabic wisdom means putting everything in its rightful place. Thus, with respect to Allah, *al-Hakeem* means the One to whom belongs the highest wisdom. He is the All-Wise in His creation, and commands. Therefore, He created nothing out of mere frivolity, nor did He legislate anything that is vain and of no use.

4. The Most Beneficent (*Ar-Rahmaan*) and the Most Merciful (*ar-Raheem*)

Allah said: “**He is the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.**” [Quran 59: 22]

These attributes are often mentioned together in Islamic scriptures and they refers to the vastness of Allah’s Mercy. There is a slight difference between these attributes whereby *ar-Rahmaan* refers to the vastness of Allah’s mercy, and *ar-Raheem* refers to its effect on His creation. So *ar-Rahmaan* is the Owner of vast Mercy, and *ar-Raheem* is the Owner of Mercy that encompasses His creation.

The hadeeth states that Allah’s mercy is so vast that He took only a small part of it which He gave to the creation, and through it they are merciful to each other. Thus, he retained the bulk of His mercy. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “**Allah created mercy in one hundred parts and He retained with Him ninety-nine parts, and He has sent down upon the earth one part, and it is because of this one part that there is mutual love among the creation so much so that the animal lifts up its hoof from its young one, fearing that it might harm it.**” [Muslim, hadeeth number 2752]

5. The Loving (*al-Wadood*)

Allah says: “**And He is the Forgiving, the Affectionate.**” [Quran 85: 14]

Allah loves His Prophets and Messengers (peace be upon them) and their followers, and they love Him. He is dearer to them than everything else. He has filled their hearts with love for Him and their tongues utter words of praise to Him. Their hearts are drawn to Him in love and sincerity and, they turn in repentance to Him at all times.

6. The Just (*al-'Adl*)

Al-'Adl is the One who judges between His servants in this life, and the Hereafter with justice and fairness. He will not oppress anyone in the slightest manner, and no one will be made to bear the burden of anyone. He will not punish anyone above the extent of his sin, nor will He reward anyone less than what he deserves.

7. The One who does what He wants (*al-Fa'aal Lima Yureed*)

Allah said: **“He does what He wills.”** [Quran 85:16]

Allah’s power and implementation of His will and decree are so perfect such that He does whatever He wants to do. He does not consult anyone, nor does He need anyone’s approval or consent in His deeds. When He wants to do anything, He says, “Be,” and it is. Although, He does what He wants, all His actions are based on perfect knowledge and complete wisdom, and they are all praiseworthy.

8. The Forbearing (*Al-Haleem*)

Allah says: **“Allah is the Appreciative, the Forbearing.”** [Quran 64: 17]. He also said: **“And know that Allah is Ever-forgiving, forbearing.”** [Quran 2: 235]

Allah bestows abundant, detectable, and undetectable favours on His creation despite their many transgressions, and acts of disobedience. He is gentle on those who disobey Him so that they may repent, and return to the straight path. He gives them a chance to make amends.

9. The Provider (*ar-Razzaaq*)

Allah says: **“Indeed, it is Allah who is the [continual] Provider, the firm possessor of strength.”** [Quran 51: 58].

Allah provides for all His servants and creatures. His provision covers all the things which are needed by His creatures. His provision for His servants is of two types:

- 1) The general provision which is given to the righteous and the sinners. This pertains to physical needs and requirements.
- 2) The special provision: This relates to nourishing the hearts with knowledge and faith. This is for the righteous and obedient.

10. The Guardian (*al-Hafeez*)

Allah said: “**And your Lord, over all things, is Guardian.**” [Quran 34: 21]

Allah protects and preserves His creation. He protects His true worshippers from sin, and destruction. He watches over them during their times of activity and rest.

As far as explaining Allah’s names and attributes, I will stop here. An exhaustive discussion is beyond the scope of this book. More on this topic has been written in books which are dedicated to the explanation of Allah’s names and attributes.

The benefits of knowing Allah’s names and attributes

There are a number of benefits in knowing Allah’s names and attributes, and these are as follows:

1. Knowing Allah, His names and attributes is the best form of knowledge. This is because the level of honour of any kind of knowledge is related to the object of knowledge, and the object of knowledge in this case is Allah, the Exalted, through His names, attributes and deeds. Engaging oneself in seeking this knowledge and studying it properly is the pursuit of the highest objective, and attaining it is one of the best gifts a person may be given.
2. Knowing Allah makes a person love and fear Him, have hope in Him, and be sincere towards Him in his actions.. There is no way to know Allah except by knowing His Most Beautiful Names and seeking a proper understanding of their meanings. In any case, how can a person worship a Lord and a God whom he does not know?
3. Knowing Allah by His Most Beautiful Names increases ones faith, as was stated by Shaykh Abd ar-Rahmaan ibn Si’di who said: “ The more a person learns about the names and attributes of Allah, the more his faith increases and the stronger his conviction becomes.” (*Al-Tawdeeh wa al-Bayaan li Shajarat al-Eemaan* by al-Si’di, p. 41).
4. Knowing Allah, His names and attributes makes a person stable and content in the face of the trials and tribulations of the world. Thus, a person will not resort to suicide or other undesirable means to solve his or her problems because he or she knows that Allah, the Supreme Being is All-Seeing, All-Knowing, and All-Hearing, and His help is at hand when a person turns to Him.

Questions

1. Discuss ten of Allah's attributes.
2. "Allah has ninety-nine names only." Discuss
3. Analyse the importance of Allah's names and attributes.

Chapter Three: The five pillars of Islam

Objectives

By the end of this chapter, the student should be able to do the following:

- Identify the five pillars of Islam
- Assess the significance of the five pillars of Islam

The five pillars of Islam

Islam is based on five pillars as was stated in the hadeeth of *Saheeh Muslim* which states: “Islam is based on (the following) five (principles):

1. To testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and Muhammad is Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him).
2. To offer the (compulsory congregational) prayers dutifully and perfectly.
3. To pay Zakat (i.e. obligatory charity).
4. To perform Hajj. (i.e. Pilgrimage to Mecca)
5. To observe fast during the month of Ramadan.” [Saheeh al-Bukhaari, hadeeth number 8].

These details of these pillars are as follows:

1. To testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and Muhammad is Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him)

This is the first pillar of Islam. In Arabic, testifying that none is worthy of worship except Allah, and that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is His Messenger is known as *Shahaadah* (the testimony). Believing in this is known as *Iman* (belief). This refers to believing in the Oneness of Allah in His Lordship and also believing that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is Allah's Messenger.

The six articles of Iman: *Iman* also consists of six articles. These articles were mentioned in the hadeeth of Muslim which states that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was asked about *Iman*, and he said: “It is that you believe in Allah and His angels and His Books and His Messengers and in the Last Day, and in fate (*qadar*), both in its good and in its evil aspects.” [Saheeh Muslim, hadeeth number 8]

Iman: I have discussed Iman above.

Belief in angels: It is part of *Iman* to believe in angels. They were created by Allah from light. Their number is vast and is only known by Allah. The angels have different tasks which were assigned by Allah. The angel Gabriel (Jibreel in Arabic) is responsible for revelation, and He was sent with revelation to Allah's prophets. There is an angel who will be responsible for blowing the Trumpet twice, the first time will be for ending the world, and the second time will be for resurrection. There are angels that are in charge of taking the souls of people when their prescribed time is over. This is done by the Angel of Death about whom Allah says: “Say: ‘The Angel of Death, who is set over you, will take your souls.’” [Quran 32: 11]. The Angel of Death is helped by other angels who help him in his tasks. Allah says, “Until when death approaches one of you, Our messengers (i.e. the

Angel of Death and his assistants) take his soul, and they never neglect their duty. Then they are returned to Allah, their Master, the Just Lord.” [Quran 6: 61-62]. Some angels are responsible for protecting people.

Belief in Allah’s Books: Allah revealed books to His prophets of different times. Some of the revealed books which were mentioned by Allah in the Quran are the Quran, the Torah, the Gospel, the Psalms, and the scriptures of Abraham and Moses.

Belief in Allah’s Books entails the following:

1 – Firm belief that all of them were revealed by Allah, and that they consist of Allah’s words which He spoke. Some of them were heard from Him from behind a veil, without there being any intermediary from among the angels. Some were conveyed by an angelic Messenger to a human Messenger. Some were written by Allah’s own Hand, as He says: **“It is not given to any human being that Allah should speak to him unless (it be) by Revelation, or from behind a veil, or (that) He sends a Messenger to reveal what He wills by His Leave. Verily, He is Most High, Most Wise.”** [Quran: 42:51], and He also says: **“... and to Musa (Moses) Allah spoke directly.”** [Quran 4:164]

And Allah said concerning the Torah: **“And We wrote for him on the Tablets the lesson to be drawn from all things and the explanation for all things.”** [Quran 7:145]

2 – The Books that Allah has mentioned by name are to be believed in by name. These are the Books which Allah has named in the Qur’an.

Belief in Allah’s Messengers

This is believing that Allah sent to every nation, a messenger from amongst them, to call them to worship Him alone, and not to ascribe partners to Him in worship. All the messengers of Allah were people of the highest moral calibre, truthful, righteous, wise, pious, brave, intelligent, and honest. They conveyed everything with which Allah sent them, and they did not conceal or alter anything. They did their tasks according to Allah’s will, and they did not seek financial gain, or fame for doing Allah’s work.

The main message of all the prophets was the same, and that was calling people to worship only one true God (Tawheed). However, they differed in legislation as laws applicable in one area or place where not applied to another area or time. Allah said: **“And We sent not before you any messenger except that We revealed to him that, "There is no deity except Me, so worship Me.”** [Quran 25:21].

The difference between a prophet (*nabi*) and a messenger (*rasul*)

The messenger (*rasul*) was given a new legislation which he preached to the people while a prophet (*nabi*) preached the legislation which was previously revealed to another prophet.

Belief in the messengers implies the following:

1 – Firmly believing that they were sent by Allah.

2 – Belief in those messengers whose names were mentioned in the Scriptures such as Muhammad, Ibrahim (Abraham), Musa (Moses), ‘Eesa (Jesus) and Nuh (Noah) (may blessings and peace be upon them all). With regard to those who have been mentioned in general terms but whose names are not known, Muslims are obliged to believe in them in general terms. Allah says: “**And, indeed We have sent Messengers before you (O Muhammad), of some of them We have related to you their story. And of some We have not related to you their story**”[Quran 40:78]

3 – Believing in the authentic reports that have been narrated from the Messengers.

4 – The people whom a messenger were sent to had to follow the laws which the messenger was given by Allah. Therefore, Muslims have to follow the laws of Muhammad (peace be upon him) who is the last messenger according to Islamic texts.

Belief in the prophets and messengers has the following benefits:

1- Respecting and honouring the messengers because they were people who were chosen by Allah to guide people, and they did good works.

2-Following the guidance and example of these prophets because they led people to all goodness, and forbade them from all evil.

3- Recognising and appreciating Allah’s favours because He did not leave people astray. Rather, he sent prophets and messengers to them so that they could be guided.

Belief in the Last Day

This is believing in the day of Judgement in which all the people will be judged by Allah. Those who are obedient, and pious believers will enter Paradise, while those who are evil and disobey Allah, and disbelieve in Him will be thrown into Hellfire. Belief in the Last Day includes believing in the signs that precede it, in death, what comes after death, and torment or blessing in the grave, the Trumpet-blast and resurrection, the details of the Day

of Resurrection, Paradise and its delights, and Hell and its torments. All these are issues of the unseen, therefore, belief in them is based on what was revealed in the Quran, and narrated in the hadeeth.

Belief in the Last Day has the following benefits:

- 1 - The desire to do acts of obedience and worship, and to strive hard in doing so, in the hope of attaining the rewards of that Day.
- 2 - Fear of committing sins or approving them, for fear of the punishment of that Day.
- 3 - The believer will be consoled for whatever he misses out on of worldly luxuries and delights, because of his hope for the delights and rewards of the Hereafter.
- 4- Not losing hope when a person does not get justice in the worldly life because Allah's judgement on the Last Day will be final, and He judge people fairly.

Belief in fate (qadar)

The last article of faith is belief in fate (*qadar*). This is belief in predecree and predestiny. It involves the following aspects:

- 1 - Belief that Allah knows all things, in general terms and in detail. Not a single atom is unknown to Him in the heavens or on earth.
- 2 - Belief that Allah has decreed all things in the Preserved Tablet (*al-Lawh al-Mahfooz*), fifty thousand years before He created the heavens and the earth.
- 3 - Belief that the will of Allah is irresistible and His decree is comprehensive, so nothing happens in this universe, good or bad, but by His will.
- 4 - Belief that all that exists was created by Allah.

So, everything that happens in this world is known by Allah, and it happens by His will. However, this works hand in hand with free will. Thus, a person chooses whether he wants to do good or evil, and he is rewarded or punished based on his choice. Nevertheless, Allah knows beforehand what each person will choose because His knowledge is all-encompassing.

Why does evil occur?

- 1- It is a test. People can be tested with poverty or sickness to gauge their reaction to their circumstances. Thus, they will be rewarded or punished according to their actions.

2- Allah has placed physical and moral laws in the universe. Allah allows suffering to occur when one or more of these laws are broken. The physical law is based on cause and effect. Therefore, sickness occurs if a person does not take care of his or her health or when one is exposed to infection. Similarly, accidents occur due to human errors, defects in vehicles, or when the roads are not in right shape.

3. Sometimes suffering is spiritual purification which results in reward. Prophet Muhammad said: *“No fatigue, nor disease, nor sorrow, nor sadness, nor hurt, nor distress befalls a Muslim, even if it were the prick he receives from a thorn, but that Allah expiates some of his sins for that.”* [Saheeh al-Bukhaari, hadeeth number 5641].

4. Natural disasters like tsunamis ensure reward through entry into Paradise by the affected people because the hadeeth states that among the people who are considered to be martyrs are the one who dies of plague, the one who dies of diseases of the stomach, the one who dies because of drowning, and the one who dies under the debris (of construction, etc.). [Saheeh al-Bukhaari, hadeeth number 5641].

Prayer (salah)

Prayer is the second pillar of Islam. It is a key element of religion. Therefore, a Muslim is required to pray to Allah in the prescribed manner in all circumstances, whether at home or when travelling, in good health or in sickness. Muslims pray five times a day at prescribed times. Prayer was prescribed one and half years before the *Hijrah*.

The times of prayer

The times of prayer were legislated in the early days of Islamic history before the appearance of watches, and mobile phone applications. Thus, the times of prayer were based on universal symbols which could be known by any Muslim whether he was educated or not, literate or illiterate. However, in modern times Muslims can easily know of the times of prayer through time tables or mobile phone applications.

1. The Fajr prayer: The first prayer of the day is known as the Fajr prayer. This prayer starts at the break of dawn and ends at sunrise.

2. The Zuhr prayer: The second prayer of the day begins when the sun passes the meridian, and it ends when the shade of anything is equal to its length.

3. The Asr prayer: The third prayer of the day starts when the time of Zuhr prayer ends and ends at sunset.

4. The Maghrib prayer: The fourth compulsory prayer of the day starts at sunset and ends when the twilight disappears from the sky.

5. **The Isha prayer:** The last prayer of the day starts when the twilight disappears from the sky, and continues until dawn.

The conditions of prayer

There are some prerequisites which should be met before prayer can be considered to be valid. The conditions are as follows:

1. Islam; the person performing *salah* must be a believer in the religion of Islam.
2. Discretion; the person must have reached the age of discernment which is seven years.
3. Sanity; the person must be mentally sound.
4. The prayer must be performed at the appropriate times which were discussed above.
5. Cleanliness from impurities.
6. Wearing clothes which cover the prescribed parts. The prescribed dress code for men is to wear what covers the area between the navel to the knees while women are required to cover their entire bodies except the face and palms of the hands.
7. Absence of impurities on the person's body, clothes, and place of prayer.
8. Facing the direction of Mecca.
9. The intention to pray.

Zakat (obligatory charity)

Zakat is the compulsory giving of a set proportion of one's wealth to charity. It is a financial type of worship which causes self-purification. It is paid once annually. It is the third pillar of Islam. The wealth of the person who pays Zakat must have reached a minimum threshold which is called the *nisab*.

Categories of wealth upon which Zakat is obligatory

Zakat is compulsory on the following four categories of wealth:

- 1) freely grazing livestock
- 2) agricultural produce
- 3) moveable valuables (that is, gold, silver, and paper money, etc)
- 4) trade items

The categories of Zakat recipients

There are different types of people who deserve to receive Zakat. These include the poor and the utterly destitute, the needy, the officials who collect and distribute zakat, the people who are overwhelmed by debt, and the travelers who are cut off from their homeland, and require assistance.

Fasting (Sawm)

Fasting is the fourth pillar of Islam. It is abstaining from food, drink, and sexual relations from dawn to sunset. It is obligatory upon every sane, post-pubescent Muslim whose health makes him or her capable of fasting. Women who are experiencing their monthly menses or post-partum bleeding are exempt from fasting. Fasting is in Ramadan, the ninth month of the Muslim calendar. Women fast these missed days later in the year after Ramadan.

The commencement of Ramadan

Ramadan starts either by

- 1) Sighting of the new moon by a trustworthy Muslim.
- 2) Completing of thirty days of the month of Sha'ban.

***Suhoor* (the pre-dawn fast)**

It is recommended to partake of the *suhoor* meal before fasting. This is a blessed meal, and it strengthens the believers, and enables them to fast without much difficulty. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: “*My nation will remain on goodness as long as they hasten to break the fast, and take the pre-dawn meal at its latest time.*” (Ahmad)

Hajj

Hajj is the fifth pillar of Islam. It is the pilgrimage to Mecca which is compulsory upon capable and healthy Muslims once in a lifetime. Hajj is the largest gathering of people on earth whereby two million people converge on Mecca to perform the rites of pilgrimage. Hajj is performed for five to six days in the month of Thul Hijjah, and that is from the 8th to the 12th or 13th of Thul Hijjah. Hajj involves staying in the tent city of Mina, supplicating in the plain of ‘Arafah, throwing pebbles at the Jamarat pillars next to Mina, slaughtering animals for the sake of Allah, and circumambulating round the Ka’bah. Thus, Hajj is a financial and physical act of worship, and involves many forms of worship.

The significance of the five pillars of Islam

These pillars have religious, financial, economic, and social significance.

Iman

-Without *Iman* and the declaration of faith whereby a person proclaims belief in Allah, and the prophethood of Muhammad, a person cannot be considered to be a Muslim.

-In Islam no act of worship or good deed is acceptable if the person does not have *Iman*.

-*Iman* gives a person a good grounding whereby he or she knows that there is a higher power who takes care of issues. So, when that person faces difficulty, he or she will not lose hope, or become despondent. The person will not become suicidal or suffer from stress-related illnesses like hypertension.

Prayer

-Success in the Hereafter and entry into Paradise is based on performing the five daily prayers.

- All the jurists agreed that a person who denies the compulsoriness of *salah* cannot be considered to be a Muslim.

- The majority of the jurists were of the view that if a person misses prayer because of negligence and laziness, then he or she has committed a major sin.

-Prayer is the only act of worship which is compulsory for everybody in all situations. Even the sick and the travelers are not exempt from prayer. It is the most frequent major type of worship.

-Prayer ensures that a person does not forget His Lord because of his daily chores, and involvement in worldly affairs.

-Prayer is a direct connection with God, and allows a person to inform God of his or her needs of the world, and the Hereafter.

Zakat

-A person who does not pay Zakat is committing a major sin, and if he dies without repenting, he is liable for severe punishment in the Hereafter.

-The hadeeth states that if people withhold Zakat, God will punish them with droughts.

-Zakat ensures that brotherhood and love is maintained among Muslims. The poor will not hate the rich because they will be getting help from them.

-Zakat ensures social development by uplifting the poor and the underprivileged, and it breaks the vicious circle of poverty which may afflict some people.

-It is a religious social safety net which cushions people from extreme deprivation and hopelessness.

Fasting

-Fasting is very important in Islam.

-If a Muslim fasts sincerely in Ramadan, hoping for reward from God, all his previous sins will be forgiven.

-Fasting ensures entry into Paradise and salvation from the Hellfire.

-It teaches discipline and helps people to have a strong will

-It helps in maintaining health

-It creates empathy and sympathy. The rich feel the pangs of thirst and hunger. Thus, they will be ready to help the others because they will know how deprivation feels.

Hajj

-Hajj is very significant.

-The reward for an accepted hajj is Paradise.

-A capable person who does not go for hajj severely compromises his or her faith.

-Hajj emphasizes unity. The males wear one type of clothing regardless of class, status, and colour. All the Muslims gather in one place to engage in the various acts of worship associated with hajj.

-Physical fitness is enhanced during hajj as the pilgrims move from place to place and engage in different acts of worship.

-The Muslims benefit through travelling, interacting with people from various places with different customs and cultures, and they are exposed to a different environment.

Questions

1. “The five pillars of Islam are mere acts of worship.” Discuss
2. Assess the religious, financial, economic, and social significance of the five pillars of Islam.

Chapter Four: Shariah Law

Objectives

By the end of this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Explain Shariah Law
- Identify instances where Shariah Law is applied

The Shariah

Linguistically, Shariah means the way. Technically, it refers to “the sacred law of Islam which is an all-embracing body of religious duties, the totality of Allah's commands that regulate the life of every Muslim in all its aspects.” (Schacht, 1964). Therefore, it is not

only a set of punitive measures like flogging the drunkard, the capital punishment for adultery, and murder, and so on as has been wrongly understood in some circles.

The *Maqaasid ash-Shariah* (The objectives of the Shariah)

I am of the opinion that the discussion of the Shariah would be incomplete without a discussion on the objectives of the Shariah. Since Allah is Just, All-Knowing, and All-Wise, His Shariah is based on noble objectives which are beneficial to His creation, and protect them from harm. “Verily, the Sharia is founded upon wisdom and welfare for the servants in this life and the afterlife. In its entirety it is justice, mercy, benefit, and wisdom. Every matter which abandons justice for tyranny, mercy for cruelty, benefit for corruption, and wisdom for foolishness is not a part of the Sharia even if it was introduced therein by an interpretation.” (*I’laam al-Muwaqqi’een* 3/11)

Al-Allaf (2003) identified four main characteristics of the *Maqaasid ash-Shariah* which are that they should be:

- 1) the basis of legislation
- 2) universal
- 3) inclusive and
- 4) definitive.

The scholars deduced that the Shariah was meant to protect five things (religion, the self, mind, offspring, and property), and these are the main rights of people in this life.

Preservation of the religion

Allah legislated laws to prevent anything which may affect the religion adversely. Thus, Allah prohibited the worship of anything besides Him, disbelieving in Him, and elevating created beings to the status of the Creator. Anyone who contravenes this will be punished by Allah. Moreover, Allah made it illegal to innovate acts of worship in Islam, and invent ways of worship which were not legislated by Him in the Quran or in the Sunnah.

Preservation of the self

After a person secures his religion, he has to preserve his life. Therefore, the life of a human being is sacrosanct, and it is not permissible to kill anyone unjustly. Thus, murder and

suicide are prohibited in Islam. Islam legislated a severe punishment for murder. Consequently, anything that threatens a person's life, health, and well-being is prohibited. In this regard a person has to take care of his physical well-being by engaging in sports, and eat pure and wholesome food which does not endanger his or her health. The hadeeth indicates that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) used to engage in health-enhancing physical activities like walking to the Quba mosque for prayers from his mosque once a week. He would also go back on foot. The mosque is five kilometers away from his mosque. He also raced with his wife Aisha.

Preservation of the mind

The mind guides a person to what is right and what is wrong, and it is the cornerstone of liability. Therefore, it must be protected from anything which clouds it, and hinders its function. Thus, any intoxicant regardless of whether it is a gas, liquid or a solid is prohibited in Islam.

Preservation of offspring

The family is the building block of the society. Therefore, there is legislation to protect this important institution from destruction. Thus, *zina* is forbidden in Islam. Zina refers to both fornication which is sexual intercourse outside marriage done by previously unmarried people, and adultery which is sex outside marriage by married people or previously married people. This is to protect the society and the family from illicit children, and attributing offspring to people who are not their parents.

Preservation of property

People work hard to save and build wealth through which they acquire property. Thus, property is valuable, and it must be protected. Therefore, Islam legislated laws which protect property by making stealing illegal, and prescribing punishments for thieves.

Instances where the Sharia is applied

The Sharia regulates all facets of a Muslim's life. It covers beliefs, acts of worship, the dressing code, dietary laws, laws pertaining to trade and enterprise, the family, international relations, funeral and burial rites, the penal code and so on. I will discuss some instances where the Sharia is applied below:

Dietary Laws

Islamic Law controls what Muslim should eat and what they should not eat. Thus, Muslims are commanded to eat wholesome foods which keep them healthy, and does not harm their bodies. Allah said: **“O you who believe, eat from the good things which We have provided for you and be grateful to Allah if it is [indeed] Him that you worship.”** [Quran 2: 172]

In general, most foods are allowed. However, Allah has placed restrictions whereby certain foods have been prohibited, and they cannot be consumed by Muslims. An example of that is pork. Allah prohibited the consumption of pork in the Quran, and He said: **“He has only forbidden to you dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than Allah”** [Quran 2: 173]. Pork is also prohibited in the Sunnah where a hadeeth states: *“Allah and His Apostle made illegal the trade of alcohol, dead animals, pigs and idols.”* [Saheeh al-Bukhaari, hadeeth number 2236]

Other prohibited animals are all meat-eating animals like lions, tigers, cats, and dogs. Likewise, predatory birds such as falcons, and eagles are prohibited. Insects, snakes, and mice are also prohibited.

Muslims are prohibited from consuming intoxicants and alcoholic beverages. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: *“Every intoxicant is forbidden.”* [Saheeh Muslim, hadeeth number 2003].

Similarly, Muslims are prohibited from eating animals which die without being slaughtered. Likewise, animals which are slaughtered in a manner which does not conform to the Sharia are prohibited.

In most countries, animals which have been slaughtered according to Islamic Law are packaged in containers labeled *halal*. The word *halal* means permissible, so that meat will be permissible for Muslims.

The conditions for slaughtering animals in Islam were outlined by Bahammam (2013) as follows:

- ✓ The person who slaughters the animal must be a Muslim or a Jew or a Christian. [In Islamic terminology, Jews and Christians are referred to as people of the Book in reference to the fact that Moses (peace be upon him) and Jesus (peace be upon

him) received revelation from Allah in the form of books]. Moreover, the person who slaughters the animal must have reached the age of discretion.

- ✓ The instrument used to slaughter the animal must be suitable for the job, and it must be sharp. Thus a knife may be used for slaughtering. It is forbidden to use anything that can kill the animal due to its heavy weight, or to kill the animal by hitting it with a heavy or blunt tool, or to render the animal unconscious by electric stunning.
- ✓ The person who is slaughtering the animal must ensure that its trachea, oesophagus, and the two blood vessels on either side of the throat are cut.
- ✓ The name of Allah must be uttered when slaughtering by saying: “*Bismillah*” (In the name of Allah).

The Sharia in trade and enterprise

The Sharia regulates trade and enterprise. It encourages documentation of transactions and debts to reduce or avoid disputes. Allah states: “**O you who believe, when you contract a debt for a specified term, write it down. And let a scribe write [it] between you in justice.**” [Quran 2: 282]

Cheating, deception and lying in business is not permissible. They cause the loss of blessings in a transaction. On the other hand, truthfulness ensures that the sale is blessed. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “*The seller and the buyer have the right to keep or return goods as long as they have not parted or till they part; and if both the parties spoke the truth and described the defects and qualities (of the goods), then they would be blessed in their transaction, and if they told lies or hid something, then the blessings of their transaction would be lost.*” [al-Bukhaari, hadeeth number 2079]

Trading in impermissible things like alcohol and pork is prohibited. Likewise, Muslims are prohibited from being involved in transactions which involve interest. Allah said: “**Allah has permitted trade and He has forbidden interest.**” [Quran 2: 275]

The Sharia encourages an entrepreneurial spirit, and handiwork as means of earning a honourable livelihood. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked: “*What is best form of earning? He said: “A man’s earning from the work of his hands, and every blessed sale.*” [Ahmad, hadeeth number 17 265]

Funeral and burial rites

The Sharia guides Muslims on how to conduct the funeral and burial rites. It tells the Muslim faithful that although death, and the loss of loved one is a painful and saddening event, it should be accepted as a trial, and part of Allah's decree. Allah said: **“And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient. Who, when disaster strikes them, say, “Indeed we belong to Allah , and indeed to Him we will return.”** [Quran 2: 155-156] The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: *“When Allah loves a people He tests them. Whoever accepts that wins His pleasure but whoever is discontent with that earns His wrath.”* [Ibn Maajah, hadeeth number 4031]

When a Muslim dies four things should be done:

- Buying the shroud (*kafan*) to bury the deceased. The shroud is bought with money from the deceased's estate. Muslims are not buried in coffins. Rather, they are covered in shrouds which are pieces of white material which cover the whole body. Then they are placed in the graves. It is recommended to cover men in three cloths, and to cover women in five cloths.
- Washing the deceased. A dead Muslim is washed before burial. There is a myth associated with this whereby it is claimed that the water used for washing the deceased is used for cooking meals which are prepared at the funeral. This is not true because such a practice is not mentioned in any Islamic text. Moreover, doing so would be criminal behavior which exposes people to diseases and infection. Islam does not condone criminality.

Other myths associated with washing the deceased are claims that a hosepipe is put into the deceased's mouth to wash him or her. This has no evidence in Islam. Moreover, after a person dies *rigor mortis* (the stiffness of the body after death) sets in, and it would be futile to put a hosepipe in the person's mouth. Therefore, that would be a waste of time.

- Praying for the deceased: The funeral prayer is made for a deceased person. This enables the Muslims to ask Allah to forgive the deceased. However, this does not mean that a person can live an evil life banking on the funeral prayer to be done after his or her death. A prayer is asking Allah for favours, and forgiveness, and depending on the circumstances, Allah may reject the prayer and the supplication.
- Burying the deceased. The deceased is buried after the funeral prayer. Muslims are required to bury the dead as soon as possible. The Prophet (peace be upon him)

said: “*Hurry up with the dead body (for its burial).*” [Saheeh Muslim, hadeeth number 944].

Some instances where the Islamic legislated punishments are applied

There are a number of crimes for which punishments were legislated in Islam. These prescribed punishments are also known as *hudood*. These punishments seem severe at the first instance but they are actually deterrents. They are not applied at all times. However, their severity protects the rest of the society from the ravages of crime. The punishments are carried out after the due process has been followed, and they are not meted out randomly. The *hudood* are applicable in the following instances:

Murder

The capital punishment is applicable in cases of murder. This punishment is applied by the authorities after due process, and a trial. So, it is not a random issue where people are being decapitated anyhow. The rationale of the law is that taking the life of one offender protects the lives of millions because people will realize the gravity of the offence. Thus, in Saudi Arabia where the Sharia is applied there is a low rate of murder. In 2015, the UN office of drugs and crime reported the murder rate in Saudi Arabia to be 1.5 per 100,000, with 472 recorded offences. In comparison, the rate of murder is relatively higher in countries which do not apply the capital punishment. For example, fifty-seven people are killed every day in South Africa. In 2017 the number of people who were murdered was 20 336. (news24.com)

However, it should be pointed out that the capital punishment is not the only available option in cases of murder. If the deceased’s family decides to forgive the offender for any reason, or consideration, then he or she may be released scot-free. Moreover, the offender may be forgiven in return for paying blood money to the murdered person’s relatives. Allah said: **“But if the killer is forgiven by the brother (or the relatives, etc.) of the killed against blood money, then adhering to it with fairness and payment of the blood money, to the heir should be made in fairness. This is an alleviation and a mercy from your Lord. So after this whoever transgresses the limits (i.e. kills the killer after taking the blood money), he shall have a painful torment.”** [Quran 2: 178]

Theft

The prescribed punishment for theft is cutting off the hand of the offender. The hand is cut off at the wrist. Allah said: “[As for] the thief, the male and the female, amputate their hands in recompense for what they committed as a deterrent [punishment] from Allah . And Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise.” [Quran 5: 38] This law ensures the protection of property. In Saudi Arabia, there were 0.005 cases of theft per 100 000 people in 1988 as was indicated by Sheptycki, Wardak, and Hardie-Bick.

Adultery and fornication

The punishment for fornication is one hundred lashes, while those who commit adultery are stoned to death. However, there are stringent measures before this, and these include the fact that there must be four just witnesses who catch the culprits in the act. Therefore, it is very difficult to prove this crime because people do not do it publicly. Thus, there are few instances when this punishment has been applied, and that has been through confessions, or when unmarried women are seen pregnant.

Is the woman who is raped supposed to provide four witnesses, and is she forced to marry the person who rapes her?

There is a common misconception whereby it is believed that if a woman is raped, then she must provide four witnesses and she is forced to marry the man who rapes her. However, this is a baseless claim which is not supported by an iota of evidence from the sources of Islamic evidence. However, the raped woman is a victim who deserves mercy and protection. Therefore, when she reports her case, the culprits can be caught through DNA tests, and other scientific evidences. The woman is not punished in any manner whatsoever.

Discretionary (*ta'zeer*) punishments

The other form of punishments applicable in Islamic law are called *ta'zeer* punishments. These are punishments for which no punishment was prescribed but they are left to the discretion of the judge or the state. An example is the death punishment which is applicable for drug dealing in Saudi Arabia. This punishment was not specifically mentioned in the Quran and Sunnah. Rather, it was legislated by the authorities to protect the society from the scourge of drugs which are a destroyer of the individual, family, and the society.

Questions

1. Discuss the application of the Sharia in dietary laws, trade and enterprise, funeral and burial rites, the penal code.
2. Analyse the Islamic penal code with particular regard to the prescribed and discretionary punishments.

Chapter Five

The role of Muhammad

Objectives

By the end of this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Explain the role of Muhammad in the establishment of Islam.
- Evaluate the legacy of Muhammad.

Muhammad's place in history

Undoubtedly, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is a remarkable figure in history. In his book *The 100, A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History*, Michael Hart, who is not a Muslim, chose Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as the most influential figure in history. He said: “My choice of Muhammad to lead the list of the world’s most influential persons may surprise some readers and may be questioned by

others, but he was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the religious, and secular levels.

Of humble origins, Muhammad founded and promulgated one of the world's great religions, and became an immensely effective political leader. Today, thirteen centuries after his death, his influence is still powerful and pervasive.”

Although Prophet Muhammad's message is universal, he was born in Arabia, and that is where he received revelation and started proselytizing. For us to appreciate his contribution and impact on human history we need to examine life in pre-Islamic Arabia.

The state of the Arabian peninsular before the advent of Islam

Religion

The Arabs originally followed the religion of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him). However, as time passed by, the teachings of this monotheistic religion were corrupted such that by the advent of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) very few people followed it. 'Amr ibn Luhay is the first person who introduced idolatrous practices among the Arabs. Consequently, very few Arabs followed the monotheistic religion of Prophet Abraham, and they included Zaid ibn 'Amr ibn Nufayl, and Qiss ibn Saa'idah al-Iyaadi. Few Arabs were Christians like Waraqah ibn Nawfal. A few other Arabs had embraced the Jewish religion

Therefore, the majority of the Arabs worshipped idols thereby following the religion of their forefathers. Each tribe had its own specific idol. The Huthayl tribe worshipped an idol called Suwaa', while the Kalb tribe worshipped Wadd. On the other hand, the Mathhaj tribe worshipped Yaghooth, and the Khaywaan tribe worshipped Ya'ooq, and the Khuzaa'ah, and Quraysh tribe worshipped Isaaf and Naailah. However, all the tribes glorified the Manaat idol which was at the sea shore.

In addition to the main idols, the Arabs worshipped numerous lesser idols. Some of the idols could be carried on journeys while others were kept at home. Aboo Rajaa al-'Utaaridi narrated: *“We used to worship stones, and when we found a better stone than the first one, we would throw the first one away and take the latter, but if we could not get a stone then we would collect some earth (i.e. soil) and then bring a sheep and milk over the mound of earth.”* [Saheeh al-Bukhaari, hadeeth number 4376]

Politics

Two types of Arabs lived in the Arabian peninsular at this time. They were the nomadic desert dwellers known as the Bedouins, and the city dwellers. Both types of Arabs were heavily influenced by their tribes. The tribal and customary laws of each tribe dictated the relations between the members of the tribe. The tribe was led by a chief who was honoured, obeyed, and whose judgement was final in disputes. The tribal system gave the Arabs a large degree of freedom as long as they did not harm anyone.

Individual tribes could forge alliances with other tribes or wage wars against others for political or economic reasons. Wars could also break out for revenge or trivial reasons. The wars of Basus , Dahis and Ghabra lasted for forty years each. Basus, who was the aunt of Jassas had a she-camel which grazed in the preserve of Kulayb, the chief of the Banu Taghlib clan who killed it. Jassas killed him for that. This incident caused a protracted war.

The war of Dahis and Ghabra was caused by a dispute over a race. Dahis was a horse while Ghabra was a mare. A race was arranged between the two. When Dahis was about to win the race, someone drove it away, allowing Ghabra to win. This caused a long tribal war which killed many people.

The economy

The Arabian peninsular mostly consists of desert land. There is scant vegetation. So, agriculture was a limited option for the Arabs at the time of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Thus, the Arabs relied on sheep and camels for their livelihood. Arab tribesmen would move from one place to another in search of pasture for their animals.

The Arabs lagged behind other nations in industry, and manufacturing. They largely relied on foreign labour and slaves in this regard. When they wanted to rebuild the Ka'bah, they enlisted the services of an Egyptian who had settled in Mecca after surviving from a shipwreck in Jeddah (Salabi, no date).

However, the Arabs were proficient traders and businessmen. The peninsular was strategically located between Africa and eastern Asia. The Quraish profited greatly from trading because they were the dwellers of Mecca, a city which was revered by all Arabs. Therefore, they could travel safely throughout Arabia because no tribe could dare to attack the inhabitants of the holy city of Mecca. The Quraish mainly travelled to the Levant (Syria, and the surrounding areas), and Yemen for business.

The Arabian peninsular also hosted the three famous marketplaces of Ukaath, Majannah, and Thul Majaaz. These places were also centres of poetry and public speaking. Poets and orators would gather there, and showcase their skills in competitions, and this advanced poetry, and the Arabic language.

Another economic activity at that time was involvement in interest. All the rich people engaged in interest dealings. 'Abbaas, the uncle of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was renowned for trading in interest before his conversion to Islam.

The Arabs also engaged in gambling. They gambled in the meat of camels which were their prized form of wealth. Those who won would share the meat among the poor, the needy, and friends.

The social conditions

The Arabs of pre-Islamic Arabia had some common traits in their social life. They all spoke one language, that is Arabic, albeit with different dialects. They mainly subscribed to the same religion of idolatry, and they all hailed from a common ancestry.

Their social life was characterized by the following issues:

Soothsaying

Soothsayers were abundant in Arabic society. They claimed to be able to predict the future, and bring the news of heaven to people. They stayed in temples, and they would worship idols. The diviners charged fees for their services.

Superstition

Superstitious beliefs were rife in Arabia. The Arabs would desist from killing a snake because they believed that its mate would come and revenge. They also believed that if a person died, his or her soul would transform into a bird and flies which they called *hamah*.

The Arabs also believed in omens. Before travelling, they would catch a bird, and then release it. If it flew to the right side, that would be seen as a good omen, and the person would proceed with the journey. However, if the bird flew to the left, that would be a bad omen, and the journey would be cancelled.

Consuming alcohol

Drinking alcohol was an integral part of Arabian culture. The wine shops were marked with banners. Serving alcohol, and food was regarded as the hallmark of generosity, and hospitality.

Prophet Muhammad's role in the establishment of Islam

Before discussing Muhammad's role in the establishment of Islam, it is prudent to discuss his biography briefly.

A brief biography of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)

The birth of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his life before prophethood

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was born on 22 April 571 CE. However, before he was born, there was a sign and a miracle which indicated that a great figure was about to be born. Approximately forty-five or fifty days before Prophet (Muhammad) was born, the incident of the Elephant took place. This event emanated from that Abrahah, the ruler of Yemen knew that the Arabs flocked Mecca where they performed pilgrimage. So, to counter that, he built a large temple to attract the Arab pilgrims to it, and starve the Ka'bah of pilgrims. However, a man from the Kinaanah tribe was aware of Abrahah's motive. Thus, he went to the temple at night, and smeared it with excrement. When Abrahah knew of his, he was very angry, and he led an army of sixty thousand warriors to destroy the Ka'bah. His army was accompanied by approximately thirteen elephants. Abrahah chose the largest elephant for himself, and he advanced towards Mecca with his army. The Arabs could not resist this army because of its military might.

When he was close to Mecca, at a place named the Muhassir valley, his elephant knelt down, and refused to proceed. When he directed it to other directions besides Mecca, it would move but when it faced Mecca, it would not move. Then Allah sent birds which carried stones made of baked clay in their peaks and claws, and they threw these stones forcefully, hitting Abrahah's army, cutting their limbs and killed them. Many of the soldiers died on the spot. Abrahah suffered an infection, and his fingertips fell off. He retreated to San'aa in a miserable state, and he died a little while after that.

This event was miraculous because the Arabs had no answer to Abrahah's military might, and Abdul Muttalib, Prophet Muhammad's grandfather said: "The House (the Ka'bah) has a Lord who will protect it." So, Allah protected this sanctified place of worship through his intervention.

A chapter of the Qur'an was revealed about this incident. This is chapter 105 of the Noble Quran named 'The Elephant', and its wording is as follows:

“Have you not considered, [O Muhammad], how your Lord dealt with the companions of the elephant? Did He not make their plot go astray? And He sent against them birds in flocks. Striking them with stones of hard clay. And He made them like eaten straw.” [Quran 105: 1-5]

Muhammad (peace be upon him) grew up as an orphan because his father died before, he was born, and his mother died when he was six years old. His grandfather, Abdul Muttalib then took care of him. Abdul Muttalib loved Muhammad (peace be upon him) very much, and he believed that he would be someone of great stature in the future. He would say, “I swear by Allah that this boy will hold a significant position.”¹ However, this was a short-lived stay because Abdul Muttalib died when Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was eight years old.

After the death of Abdul Muttalib, Abu Talib, the Prophet's uncle became responsible for him. He held Muhammad (peace be upon him) in high esteem and treated him with great respect. He stood by Muhammad (peace be upon him) through thick and thin, and he protected him, and supported him for forty years.

When Muhammad (peace be upon him) was twelve years old he travelled with his uncle to Busra which was in Syria. There, they met a monk who was named Bahirah, and he foretold that Muhammad (peace be upon him) would be a Prophet. He held Muhammad's hand and said: “*Allah will send him with a message which will be a mercy to all beings.*” [at-Tirmithi, hadeeth number 3620]

During the Prophet's youth wars broke out between the tribes of Quraish and Banu Kinanah, and it continued for numerous years. As a result many people were killed. When the wars ended, the people felt the need “for forming a confederacy at Makkah (Mecca) for suppressing violence, and injustice, and protecting the rights of the weak, and the poor.” (Mubarakpuri, 2008) Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) took part in this initiative. He later commented about his role in it, and said: “I witnessed a confederacy in the house of ‘Abdullah ibn Jad’an. It was more appealing to me than herds of cattle. Even now in the period of Islam, I would respond positively to attending such a meeting if I were invited.” (an-Najdi, 1956)

In the early days of his youth, Muhammad worked as shepherd for Bani Sa’d. When he was twenty-five years old, he worked for Khadijah, a wealthy and honorable

¹ Ibn Hisham, 1/168.

businesswoman from the Mecca. She sent him with her goods for trade to Syria for a commission. When Muhammad (peace be upon him) returned from this journey, Khadijah discovered that she had made unprecedented profits, and attained great blessings in her trade. She was also impressed by Muhammad's truthfulness, honesty, impeccable manners, and sincerity. She became interested in getting married to him, and informed her friend Nafisah, the daughter of Muniyah about the issue. Nafisah conveyed the message to Muhammad (peace be upon him), and he agreed to the marriage. He then delegated his uncles to discuss the issue with Khadijah's uncles. Consequently, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and Khadijah got married. The marriage was blessed with six children.

Prophethood, revelation, proselytizing, and the spread of Islam

Muhammad (peace be upon him) grew up in an environment of idolatry, superstition, and immorality. However, he was not involved in any of these evil practices even before his prophethood. His honesty was unparalleled, and he was nicknamed *as-Saadiq al-Ameen* (the truthful and honest one). People would give him their things for safekeeping, and they would collect them intact. He did not like what was going on around him. Therefore, he would think deeply, and investigate into the truth. He would seclude himself in the cave of Hira which is at Mount Noor, about two miles away from Mecca.

When he was forty years old, the verses of the Qur'an were revealed to him by the angel Gabriel in the cave. This event was transmitted at length in the hadeeth of Aishah in *al-Bukhaari* which is as follows: *"The commencement of the divine revelation to Allah's Messenger (peace be upon) was in the form of good dreams which came true like bright daylight, and then the love of seclusion was bestowed upon him. He used to go in seclusion in the cave of Hira where he used to worship (Allah alone) continuously for many days before his desire to see his family. He used to take with him the journey food for the stay, and then come back to (his wife) Khadijah to take his more food till suddenly the truth descended upon him while he was in the cave of Hira. The angel came to him and asked him to read. The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied, 'I do not know how to read.' The Prophet (peace be upon him) added, 'The angel caught me (forcefully) and pressed me so hard that I could not bear it any more. He then released me and again asked me to read and I replied, 'I do not know how to read.' Thereupon he caught me again and pressed me a second time till I could not bear it any more. He then released me and again asked me to read but again I replied, 'I do not know how to read (or what shall I read)?' Thereupon he caught me for the third time and pressed me, and then released me and said, 'Read in the name of your Lord, who has created (all that exists), created man from a clot. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous.' (Quran 96: 1-3) Then Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) returned with the revelation and with his heart beating severely. Then he went to Khadijah bint Khuwaylid and said, 'Cover me! Cover me!' They covered him till his fear*

was over and after that he told her everything that had happened and said, "I fear that something may happen to me." Khadijah replied, "Never! By Allah, Allah will never disgrace you. You keep good relations with your kith and kin, help the poor and the destitute, serve your guests generously and assist the deserving calamity-afflicted ones." Khadijah then accompanied him to her cousin Waraqah bin Nawfal bin Asad bin 'Abdul 'Uzza, who, during the pre-Islamic Period became a Christian and used to write Hebrew. He would write the Gospel in Hebrew as much as Allah wished him to write. He was an old man and had lost his eyesight. Khadijah said to Waraqah, "Listen to the story of your nephew, O my cousin!" Waraqah asked, "O my nephew! What have you seen?" Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) described whatever he had seen. Waraqah said, "This is the same one who keeps the secrets (angel Gabriel) whom Allah had sent to Moses. I wish I were young and could live up to the time when your people would turn you out." Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) asked, "Will they drive me out?" Waraqah replied in the affirmative and said, "Anyone (man) who came with something similar to what you have brought was treated with hostility; and if I should remain alive till the day when you will be turned out then I would support you strongly." But after a few days Waraqah died and the revelation was also paused for a while." [Saheeh al-Bukhaari, hadeeth number 3].

These verses marked the beginning of revelation upon Muhammad (peace be upon him) and this would continue for next twenty-three years. After a hiatus in revelation, the following verses of Surah al-Muddathir (the seventy-fourth chapter of the Quran) were revealed:

“O you who covers himself [with a garment]. Arise and warn. And your Lord glorify.” [Quran 74: 1-3] In these verses, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was formally given the task to preach Islam. The Prophet started inviting those who were close to him to Islam. Thus, the early converts to Islam were the Prophet's wife, Khadijah, his cousin Ali who lived with him since his early childhood, and his friend Abu Bakr. These people embraced Islam on the first day of the mission. Abu Bakr used his influence to also invite his associates to Islam. He managed to convince eight people to embrace Islam.

Prophet Muhammad's role in the spread of Islam

There were a number of factors involving Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). These are as follows:

1. Prophet Muhammad's good manners

Prior to attaining prophethood, Muhammad (peace be upon him) was known to have an excellent character. Therefore, when he became a prophet, he had credibility, and people believed him, and quickly accepted his message. Thus, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) managed to gradually gain followers because he was bona fide. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was gentle and kind, and he instructed his followers to adopt these characteristics. His gentleness and kindness were a magnet which drew people to him. Allah said: **“So by mercy from Allah , [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and consult them in the matter. And when you have decided, then rely upon Allah . Indeed, Allah loves those who rely [upon Him].”** [Quran 3: 159] Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: *“Kindness is not to be found in anything but that it adds to its beauty and it is not withdrawn from anything but it makes it defective.”* [Saheeh Muslim, hadeeth number 2594]

Despite the fact that Muhammad (peace be upon him) was a Prophet of Allah, he was humble, and not boastful. He was easily accessible, and he interacted with everyone, and he made all his companions feel important. His title was the “servant of Allah,” and this is how he was addressed in the Quran. Allah said: **“ Exalted is He who took His Servant by night from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al- Aqsa”** [Quran 17: 1]. Ibn Mas’ood said: *“A man came to the Prophet (peace be upon him), so he spoke to him, and he started to tremble with awe. He said to him: ‘Take it easy. I am not a king; I am just a man whose mother ate dried meat.’* [Sunan ibn Maajah, hadeeth number 3312]. Muhammad (peace be upon him) forbade people from exaggerating in praising him.

2. Prophet Muhammad’s (peace be upon him) patience

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was endowed with patience, and this greatly helped his proselytizing efforts, and this helped in the spread of Islam. When Muhammad started preaching the religion of the Oneness of Allah in Mecca, he faced formidable resistance and persecution. His followers were beaten, killed and persecuted. The family of Yasir were victims of the cruelty of the Quraish, and they faced unimaginable torment. However, Muhammad (peace be upon him) was levelheaded throughout these difficult times, and he did not call for retaliation which could have caused undesirable consequences like war, and the decimation of the Muslims. He would pass by the family of Yasir when they were being tortured, and he would say: *“O family of Yasir! Be patient, you will certainly find your place in Paradise.”* (Majma’ az-Zawaa’id, 9/296)

An incident of the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) patience is in the story of Tufayl ibn ‘Amr of the Daws tribe. He embraced Islam, and went back to his tribe to invite them to Islam. However, they did not respond positively to his message. He returned to Medina,

and said: “*O Allah’s Messenger, the tribe of Daws has disbelieved and has belied you, so invoke a curse upon them. The people said: ‘Let Daws be destroyed.’ whereupon he (Allah’s Messenger) said: ‘Allah guide aright the tribe of Daws and direct them to me.’* (Saheeh Muslim, hadeeth number 2524) Tufayl went back to his people and kept on calling them to Islam, and eighty families from his tribe embraced Islam.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not react rashly when Daws rejected Islam, and he did not give up hope. Rather, he supplicated to Allah to guide the tribe instead of cursing them. Consequently, eighty families embraced Islam.

3. Migration

When the torment that was exacted upon the Muslims continued unabated, Allah permitted the Muslims to migrate. In the fifth year of prophethood twelve men, and four women migrated to Abyssinia (Ethiopia). A second group of Muslims comprising of eighty-three men and nineteen women migrated to Abyssinia later. However, the Quraish continued with their machinations against Islam, and they continued torturing the Muslims who remained behind. They also planned to kill Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Allah then granted the Prophet (peace be upon him) permission to migrate to Medina.

The migration of Muslims caused people of other lands to know Islam, and experience it at close quarters. The Muslims who migrated to Abyssinia had to explain their religion to the king after some emissaries from the Quraish followed them there, and requested that the king should expel them because they had abandoned the religion of their forefathers, and were promoting a new religion. The explanation helped in dispelling misconceptions, and the king of Abyssinia later embraced Islam, and when he died Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) performed the funeral prayer for him in absentia.

The migration to Medina paved way for the rapid expansion of Islam, and the establishment of the Islamic state. The people of Medina were more forthcoming in accepting Islam than the Meccans, and they embraced the religion in droves.

4. Teaching, learning and preaching

Although Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was illiterate, he realized the value of education, and he encouraged his followers to be educated. In fact the first verse to be revealed in the Quran proclaims, “**Read.**” The Muslims are known as “the nation of reading.” Thus, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) promoted literacy, and he emphasized on the importance of Islamic knowledge. He said: “**Whoever takes a path**

upon which to obtain knowledge, Allah makes the path to Paradise easy for him.” [Saheeh Muslim, hadeeth number 2699].

Moreover, Islam has many rules and regulations pertaining to acts of worship, transactions, and etiquettes. Therefore, a Muslim is required to know all these things, and being literate makes the task of learning easy. As I have stated previously, the Prophet (peace be upon him) personally invited people to Islam. Allah indicated that inviting people to his Oneness is the best thing that can be done by a person. He said: “**And who is better in speech than one who invites to Allah and does righteousness and says, "Indeed, I am of the Muslims."**” (Quran 41: 33) The Prophet (peace be upon him) indicated that the person who leads people to goodness gets a reward which is similar to that of the doer. He said: “*Whoever leads to good, he is like the one who does it.*” [at-Tirmithi, hadeeth number 2670] His companions also invited others to Islam as we have seen with case of Aboo Bakr. His companions taught their wives and children about Islam. Thus, Islam spread in this way.

5. Prophet Muhammad’s (peace be upon him) generosity

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was the most generous person. This affected the people that he interacted with positively, and they emulated his way of life and embraced Islam. He once gave a person a large flock of sheep which was between two mountains. The person went back to his people, and said: “*O my people embrace Islam because Muhammad (peace be upon him) gives in the manner of a person who is not afraid of poverty.*” [Saheeh Muslim, hadeeth number 2312]. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “*If I had as many camels as these thorny trees, I would have distributed them amongst you and you will not find me a miser, or a liar, or a coward.*” [Saheeh al-Bukhaari, hadeeth number 2821]

6. Prophet Muhammad’s teaching were natural and people related to them

The teaching of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) were natural, and people could easily identify with them. He called to the worship of one God, and he preached against social ills like murder, adultery, theft, dishonesty, alcoholism and cheating. He was also against injustice, discrimination and racism. These universal values appealed to people from all races, tribes, and countries. Thus, in Muhammad’s (peace be upon him) lifetime Bilaal, the Abyssinian, Suhayb, the Roman, Salman, the Persian, and ‘Abdullah ibn Salaam, the Jew embraced Islam.

Moreover, the Arabs were polygamous by nature. When Islam came, it did not prohibit polygamy but it regulated it, and limited it, and stated that a man could not marry more than four wives. Therefore, such teachings resonated with the Arabs, and they embraced them.

7. The role of the Quran in the spread of Islam

Allah chose Muhammad (peace be upon him) as the Prophet to whom he would reveal the Quran. The Quran is a miraculous book and it was a challenge to the Arabs. Moreover, it provided solutions to the problems that bedeviled Arabia at the time of revelation. Additionally, the Quran adopted a gradual approach in addressing issues. When Allah wanted to prohibit drinking alcohol, He did not do so at one go. Rather, He adopted a gradual approach which included indicating that the harm in alcohol outweighs the benefit, and ordering people not to pray when they are drunk. This effectively barred drinking during the day because Muslims are required to pray five times a day. Therefore, the only opportunity left for drinking was at night. Thereafter, Allah prohibited drinking.

The same approach was adopted to the prohibition of adultery. The Arab society was steeped in adultery, and it would not have been practical to prohibit it at the advent of Islam. Thus, the people were commanded to have faith in Allah, and know about His names and attributes. When their faith had increased, and they had knowledge about Allah, the command to desist from adultery was revealed, and it was easy for the people to comply. ‘Aaishah narrated: *“The first thing that was revealed thereof was a Surah from al-Mufasssal (the short chapters of the Quran), and in it was mentioned Paradise and the Fire. When the people embraced Islam, the verses regarding legal and illegal things were revealed. If the first thing to be revealed was: 'Do not drink alcoholic drinks.' people would have said, 'We will never leave alcoholic drinks,' and if there had been revealed, 'Do not commit illegal sexual intercourse, they would have said, 'We will never give up illegal sexual intercourse.”* [Saheeh al-Bukhaari, hadeeth number 4993].

8. The Prophet Muhammad’s example

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was a role model in all aspects of his life. The Quran states: **“Indeed in the Messenger of Allah you have a good example to follow for him who hopes in (the meeting with) Allah and the Last Day and remembers Allah much.”** [Quran 33: 21] He made great sacrifices for the advancement of Islam. He once walked from Mecca to Taif and back, and this was a distance of sixty kilometers one way. (Mubarakpuri, 1990) So, he walked for a total of one hundred and twenty kilometres only to invite people to Islam. At times he would not have any food to cook in his house for three months, and he would survive on dates and milk, but he persevered on his mission. ‘Urwah narrated that ‘Aaishah used to say to him: *“O son of my sister, by Allah, I used to see the new moon, then the new moon, then the new moon, i.e., three moons in two months, and a fire was not kindled in the house of Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). ”I (Urwah) said, "O my aunt, what were your means of sustenance?" She said; "Dates and water. But it (so happened) that Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) had some Ansar neighbours who had milch animals. They used to send Messenger of Allah (peace be upon*

him) some milk of their (animals) and he gave that to us to drink.” [Saheeh al-Bukhaari, hadeeth number 6459, Saheeh Muslim, hadeeth number 2972]

This dedication rubbed off to the followers of Muhammad who emulated his good example. This strengthened the efforts of calling people to Islam, and increased the number of the adherents to the faith. Khadijah, the Prophet’s first wife gave him moral and financial support. She used her wealth to further the cause of Islam. Likewise, the Prophet’s closest friend Abu Bakr spent a lot of money for Islam. The other companions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) like ‘Uthmaan made tremendous financial sacrifices for Islam.

The spirit of sacrifice was not limited to the financial area. It extended to seeking knowledge, imparting it to others, and preaching about Islam. A companion of the Prophet (peace be upon him) named Aboo Hurayrah forewent the worldly pleasures, and allures, and was constantly in the company of the Prophet (peace be upon him) for three years seeking religious knowledge. Other companions taught people the Quran. Some people travelled for long distances and came to Medina just to meet the Prophet (peace be upon him), and learn Islam from him. They did not seek world glory or self aggrandizement. Rather, their efforts were solely to please Allah.

9. The establishment of the Islamic state in Medina

Undoubtedly, the Muslims bore the brunt of injustice, suppression, and torture in Mecca. However, Allah had a way out for the Muslims, and he permitted them to migrate to Medina which is a city which lies approximately 450 kilometres away from Mecca. This proved to be the proverbial silver lining for Islam because it flourished in Medina. The emigrants from Mecca known as the *Muhajirun* in Arabic were welcomed by the Muslims of Medina known as the *Ansar* (the helpers). A brotherhood was formed between these two groups. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) built his mosque in Medina, and it played many roles besides being a place of worship. It was a university, a meeting place, a court room, a kind of parliament, and the launchpad for the Islamic state.

The Islamic state strengthened Islam because the Muslims were no longer a small band of people who could be attacked and persecuted will-nilly. Rather, there were now a formidable force led by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and engagement with them was to be on respectable terms. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) now had the strength to invite other heads of states, rulers and kings in the surrounding lands, and he wrote letters to them inviting them to Islam. He wrote letters to Negus, the king of Abyssinia, Muqawqis, the king of Egypt, Chosroes, the emperor of Persia, Caesar the king of Rome, Munthir ibn Sawa, the governor of Bahrain, Huadhah ibn Ali, the governor of Yamamah, and so on. He sent these letters through emissaries.

The establishment of the Islamic state meant that the Muslim faithful could practice their religion without misgivings. Moreover, the establishment of the Islamic state allowed Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to have control over Mecca. This was a very important event because some Arabs adopted a wait and see attitude about embracing Islam. They would say: “If he were a truthful Prophet, he would overcome them (the people of Mecca).” Therefore, after the Muslims gained control of Mecca, the truth became clear to them, and paganism was effectively destroyed. Thereafter multitudes entered into Islam, and delegation after delegation trooped to Medina to embrace Islam especially in the ninth year of Hijrah which is known as the year of the delegations.

Therefore, the people of Arabia and beyond had embraced Islam, and hundreds of thousands of people were now Muslims. Muhammad (peace be upon him) had achieved phenomenal success in a short time. Thus his mission was complete, and it was time for him to meet his Lord. This was stated in the Qur'an: **“When there comes the help of Allah and the victory. And you see the people entering into the religion of Allah in multitudes. So glorify the Praises of your Lord, and ask for His Forgiveness. Verily, He is the One Who accepts the repentance and forgives.”** [Quran 110: 1-3]

Was Islam spread by the sword?

A common misconception is the notion that Islam was spread by the sword. However, this is not true for a number of reasons.

Firstly: The Qur'an eschews forceful conversions, and affirms that entry into Islam is voluntary. It states: **“There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion.”** [Quran 2: 256]. Moreover, the Quran calls for dialogue, peaceful debate and discussion with people of other faiths. Allah says: **“Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is [rightly] guided.”** [Quran 16: 125]

Secondly: The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not forcefully convert anyone to Islam. When he received prophethood in Mecca, he invited people to Islam, and those who were interested in his message voluntarily converted to his religion. He was actually the victim of persecution, and his followers were threatened, harmed, and some were killed. The Muslims were forced to migrate to Abyssinia, and they later went to Medina where they established the Islamic state.

When Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was in Medina, he recognized the right of others to profess a religion of their choice, and he coexisted peacefully with them. He signed the Charter of Medina with the non-Muslims. The Charter guaranteed autonomy, and freedom of religion to the Jews.

Similarly, when caliph 'Umar gained control over Jerusalem, that was through a peace treaty with Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem in 638 H. The treaty read: "In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. This is the assurance of safety which the servant of God, 'Umar, the Commander of the faithful, has given to the people of Jerusalem. He has given them assurance of safety for themselves, for their property, their churches, their crosses, the sick and healthy of the city, and for all rituals which belong to their religion. Their church will not be inhabited by Muslims, and will not be destroyed. (Kennedy, no date).

Likewise, during the Muslim rule of Spain, the Muslims promoted religious tolerance. They did not interfere in the administration of the church. The monasteries and chapels remained untouched. The clergy maintained their position, and freely wore their uniforms. (Thanoon, no date)

Thirdly: The country with the highest number of Muslims is Indonesia with over 250 million Muslims. However, Islam did not come to Indonesia by war or forced conversions. It was introduced by Muslim traders who came to Southeast Asia for trade in silk. (Hafid, 2012)

Moreover, in contemporary times Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world. People are converting to Islam on their own volition based on research, analysis, and comparison without any threat of force.

The legacy of Muhammad

Muhammad had an eternal effect in world history, and he is as relevant today as he was relevant when he lived over 1400 years ago. His legacy can be seen through a number of issues which are as follows:

Firstly: He brought the religion which emphasized on the worship of one true God. He succeeded in his mission despite the fact that he initially faced resistance and difficulties which appeared insurmountable. This was because paganism was deep-rooted in Arabia.

Secondly: His religion preached good behavior, morality, respect, and justice. This brought sanity to Arabia which was fraught with internecine wars, and trivial rivalries.

Thirdly: Muhammad (peace be upon him) promoted knowledge and literacy. Muslims had to learn the Quran, and the rules of the religion. This promoted areas of knowledge associated with the Quran and Sunnah like Islamic jurisprudence, the sciences of the Quran, the interpretation of the Quran, the sciences of hadeeth, Arabic language grammar and morphology.

Fourthly: The Prophet (peace be upon him) brought long-lasting solutions to the problems that bedevil the world. An example is the issue of polygamy which solves the issue of the excess number of women. Another solution is the eradication of interest which causes considerable hardship to borrowers be they individuals or countries.

Fifthly: Muhammad (peace be upon him) did away with racism and alcoholism through divine legislation, and the Muslims readily complied. Racism continues to be a problem in the world today. In the 1920s, America banned alcohol, through the constitution. However, this fuelled the black market, and the ban was reversed in 1933.

Sixthly: Muhammad (peace be upon him) ensured that women were given their due rights, and respect. Prior to Islam women were considered to be inferior to men, and were regarded as a man's property. Therefore, after the death a woman's husband, she would be automatically inherited by her husband's relatives. However, the advent of Islam did away with such practices, and ensured justice for women.

What people of other faiths said about the legacy of Muhammad

At this point, I want to include a few quotations about what people of other religions said about Muhammad (peace be upon him):

Alphonse Marie Louis De Lamartine

Alphonse De Larmatine was a French poet, historian and diplomat. He lived from 1769 to 1869. He said: "If greatness of purpose, smallness of means and astounding results are the three criteria of human genius, who could dare to compare any great man in modern history with Muhammad? The most famous men created arms, laws and empires only. They founded, if anything at all, no more than material powers which often crumbled away before their eyes. This man moved not only armies, legislation, empires, peoples and dynasties, but millions of men in one-third of the then inhabited world; and more than that, he moved the altars, the gods, the religions, the ideas, the beliefs and souls...his forbearance in victory, his ambition, which was entirely devoted to one idea and in no

manner striving for an empire; his endless prayers, his mystic conversations with God, his death and his triumph after death; all these attest not to an imposture but to a firm conviction which gave him the power to restore a dogma. This dogma was two-fold, the unity of God and the immateriality of God; the former telling what God is, the latter telling what God is not; the one overthrowing false gods with the sword, the other starting an idea with the words. Philosopher, orator, apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restorer of rational dogmas, of a cult without images, the founder of twenty terrestrial empires and of one spiritual empire, that is Muhammad. As regards all the standards by which Human Greatness may be measured, we may well ask, is there any man greater than he?" (Lamartine, *Histoire de la Turquie*, , Paris, 1854, Vol. II, pp 276-277)

Edward Gibbon and Simon Ockley

Edward Gibbon was an English scholar and historian. He was born in 1737, and he died in 1794. He is the author of the book 'The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire'. He co-authored a book with Simon Ockley, and they had the following to say about Muhammad (peace be upon him):

"It is not the propagation but the permanency of his religion that deserves our wonder, the same pure and perfect impression which he engraved at Mecca and Medina is preserved, after the revolutions of twelve centuries by the Indian, the African and the Turkish proselytes of the Koran...The Mahometans have uniformly withstood the temptation of reducing the object of their faith and devotion to a level with the senses and imagination of man. 'I believe in One God and Mahomet the Apostle of God', is the simple and invariable profession of Islam. The intellectual image of the Deity has never been degraded by any visible idol; the honors of the prophet have never transgressed the measure of human virtue, and his living precepts have restrained the gratitude of his disciples within the bounds of reason and religion." (History of the Saracen Empire, p 54).

Bosworth Smith

He said: "He was Caesar and Pope in one; but he was Pope without Pope's pretensions, Caesar without the legions of Caesar: without a standing army, without a bodyguard, without a palace, without a fixed revenue; if ever any man had the right to say that he ruled by the right divine, it was Mohammed, for he had all the power without its instruments and without its supports."

Mahatma Gandhi

He was born in 1869, and he died in 1948, Delhi). He was Indian lawyer, writer, and activist who fought for India's independence from Britain. He believed in the principle of non-violence to achieve his goals.

He said: "I wanted to know the best one who holds today's undisputed sway over the hearts of millions of mankind....I became more than convinced that it was not the sword that won a place for Islam in those days in the scheme of life. It was the rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the Prophet, the scrupulous regard for his pledges, his intense devotion to his friends and followers, his intrepidity, his fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and in his own mission. These -and not the sword- carried everything before them and surmounted every obstacle. When I closed the 2nd volume (of the Prophet's biography), I was sorry there was not more for me to read of the great life." (Young India)

William Montgomery Watt

He was born in 1909, and he died in 2006. He was a Christian scholar and priest. He was a former professor of Arabic and Islamic studies at the University of Edinburgh.

He said: "His readiness to undergo persecutions for his beliefs, the high moral character of the men who believed in him and looked up to him as leader, and the greatness of his ultimate achievement all argue his fundamental integrity. To suppose Muhammad an impostor raises more problems than it solves. Moreover, none of the great figures of history is so poorly appreciated in the West as Muhammad." [W. Montgomery, *Mohammad at Mecca*, Oxford, 1953, p. 52.]

Questions

1. Discuss the impact of Muhammad in history.
2. Assess Muhammad's legacy.
3. Evaluate Muhammad's role in the establishment of Islam.

Chapter Six: Muhammad as a prophet

Objectives

By the end of this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Analyse the concept of a prophet in Islam.
- Explore the extent of Muhammad's prophetic status.

The concept of a prophet in Islam

Belief in the institution of prophethood is fundamental in Islamic creed. Allah chose to convey His message through prophets. Allah's message, rules and regulations were revealed in different books which were given to different prophets of various times. These books were conveyed by the angel Gabriel who is responsible for conveying revelation to prophets. Allah also sent down instructions for particular issues to prophets through the angel Gabriel.

The definition of a *nabi* (prophet)

In Arabic, the word *nabi* is derived from the word *nabi* which means news. The Prophet is called *nabi* because he is told, that is, Allah tells him and reveals to him.

Al-Ashqar (no date) stated that the word *nubuwwah* (prophethood) is derived from the word *nabwah* which means a raised portion of land. The Arabs used the word *nabi*, to mean landmarks which can be used for navigation.

This meaning is appropriate to prophethood in Islam because a prophet is one who has a high status in this world and the Hereafter. Moreover, the prophets are the most noble of creation, and the role models who guide and reform people.

The definition of a messenger (*rasool*)

In Arabic, the word *rasool* means a messenger who is sent on a mission. The plural of *rasool* is *rusul*. The Messengers received directives from Allah, and they conveyed these to the people.

The tasks and missions of the prophets and messengers

Allah gave a number of tasks to the messengers and prophets. These are as follows:

- Conveying Allah’s message clearly: Allah said: **“O Messenger! deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord; and if you do it not, then you have not delivered His message.”** [Quran 5: 67] This entails delivering the message with clarity, and in a manner which does away with doubts and ambiguities.
- Calling people to the worship of one true God: All of Allah’s prophets and messengers were given the task of inviting people to the worship of one true God. Allah stated: **“And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, [saying], “Worship Allah (alone) and avoid false gods.”** [Quran 16: 36]
- Bringing glad tidings to those who do good, and warning the evil doers of Allah’s punishment: Allah said: **“And We send not the messengers except as bringers of good tidings and warners.”** [Quran 18: 56]
- Reforming and purifying people’s souls: An example of this is the work that was done by Prophet Moses (peace be upon him). The Quran states: **“And We certainly sent Moses with Our signs, [saying], “Bring out your people from darkness into the light and remind them of the days of Allah .” Indeed in that are signs for everyone patient and grateful.”** [Quran 14: 5]
- Correcting deviant ideas and spurious beliefs: Allah said: **“Mankind was [of] one religion [before their deviation]; then Allah sent the prophets as bringers of good tidings and warners and sent down with them the Scripture in truth to judge between the people concerning that in which they differed. And none differed over the Scripture except those who were given it - after the clear proofs came to them - out of jealous animosity among themselves. And Allah guided those who believed to the truth concerning that over which they had**

- differed, by His permission. And Allah guides whom He wills to a straight path.”** [Quran 2: 213]
- Leading the people: The prophets were leaders among their people. The Quran states: **“[We said], "O David, indeed We have made you a successor upon the earth, so judge between the people in truth and do not follow [your own] desire, as it will lead you astray from the way of Allah ." Indeed, those who go astray from the way of Allah will have a severe punishment for having forgotten the Day of Account.”** [Quran 38: 26]. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: *“The affairs of the children of Israel were directed by the prophets. Whenever a prophet died, another prophet would succeed him.”* [Saheeh al-Jaami’ as-Sagheer, 4/190]

Characteristics of prophets in Islam

According to Islamic beliefs, prophets have the following characteristics:

- Divine protection from error concerning revelation. Allah says: **“Your companion [Muhammad] has not strayed, nor has he erred. or does he speak from [his own] inclination. It is not but a revelation revealed.”** [Quran 53: 2-4]
- Good moral conduct. The prophets were the best people in terms of behavior. This enabled them to be on the moral high ground whereby their message would be accepted. Regarding prophet Moses (peace be upon him), the Quran states: **“One of the women said, “O my father, hire him (Moses [peace be upon him]). Indeed, the best one you can hire is the strong and the trustworthy.”** [Quran 28: 26]. The Quran also praised prophet Ishmael (peace be upon him) and said: **“And mention in the Book, Ishmael. Indeed, he was true to his promise, and he was a messenger and a prophet.”** [Quran 19: 54] Allah commended Muhammad (peace be upon him) and said: **“And indeed, you are of a great moral character.”** [Quran 68: 4]
- The prophets did not regard their prophethood as a means of seeking worldly fortune or fame. Rather, it was a mission to please Allah. Regarding Noah (peace be upon him), Allah said: **“And I do not ask you for it (my message) any payment. My payment is only from the Lord of the worlds.”** [Quran 26: 109].
- The prophets were supported by miracles from Allah to show their truthfulness. For example, Jesus (peace be upon him) healed the sick, and gave life to the death. Allah states: **“And [remember] when I taught you writing and wisdom and the Torah and the Gospel; and when you designed from clay [what was] like the form of a bird with My permission, then you breathed into it, and it became a bird with My permission; and you healed the blind and the leper with My permission; and when you brought forth the dead with My permission.”**

[Quran 5: 110]. Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) hit the Red Sea with his stick, and it parted and created pathways through which people passed. Allah said: **“Then We inspired Musa (Moses) (saying): "Strike the sea with your stick." And it parted, and each separate part (of that sea water) became like the huge, firm mass of a mountain.”** [Quran 26: 63]

Muhammad as a prophet

The prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him) and associated issues

Muhammad had all the qualities of prophets which I mentioned in the preceding section. However, from an Islamic point of view what is unique about the prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him) is that he is the last prophet. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: *“There is no prophet after me.”* [Saheeh al-Bukhaari, hadeeth number 3455].

Goals of the prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him)

Al-Mansoorfuri (1998) argued the goals of the prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him) were summarized in the following verses: **“O you who covers himself [with a garment]. Arise and warn. And your Lord glorify. And your garments purify. And uncleanliness avoid. And do not confer favor to acquire more. And be patient for the sake of your Lord.”** [Qur'an 74: 1-7].

He stated that these goals are as follows:

- 1) Warning the sinners about their bad deeds, and the end results of their actions.
- 2) Proclaiming Allah’s Lordship, Splendour, Grandeur, and His Exaltedness.
- 3) Guiding people to purify themselves from external and internal impurities in creed and morals.
- 4) Teaching people about purity, cleanliness and chastity.
- 5) Spreading the message of the Lord for no fee.

6) Bearing patiently the hardships that may arise in the mission.

However, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) engaged in other duties, and public roles which supported or were necessitated by his prophethood, and these are as follows.

Head of state

Muhammad (peace be upon him) was the leader of the Islamic state which was established in Medina. He used this position to proclaim the message of Islam far and wide through the means that were available at that time. In this position, he was in charge of the resources of the nation, and he distributed them equitably, and according to Allah's commands. He took decisions which were in the best interests of the state. Despite his high position, he remained humble, focused on the Hereafter, and he did not display the trappings of power, nor was he ostentatious, and extravagant in dressing, food and speech.

General

The emergent Islamic state in Medina faced political, economic, and military threats by those who were not amused by the expansion of Islam. Therefore, where necessary the Muslims would engage in war for the best interests of the state. In those situations, prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) would wear the hat of the general, and military tactician, and lead his forces physically on the battleground.

Judge

In any settlement where people stay in large numbers, disputes naturally occur from time to time. Medina was no exception to the rule. However, these disputes were settled according to Allah's law. Thus, the Prophet judged those issues, and in crimes for which there is prescribed or discretionary punishment.

Mufti

The Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked many religious questions. Since he was the most knowledgeable person about Islam, he would issue religious verdicts on those issues. These verdicts are known as *fatwa*, and the person who issues them is called mufti. The office of the mufti has continued to the present day. People are always in need of answers especially pertaining to new issues which come up, and were not specifically addressed in

religious texts. The answers to such questions is based on inference from the evidence in the Quran and the Sunnah.

Teacher

Being a prophet went hand in hand with teaching. The newly converted Muslims needed to learn the Quran, and the rules of Islam. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) taught people that, and he practically taught them the Islamic rules of cleanliness, prayer, supplications, and other things.

Questions

1. Analyse the concept of a prophet in Islam.
2. Discuss the other roles of Muhammad which were consistent with his prophethood.
3. Evaluate the tasks and missions of prophets and messengers in Islam.

Chapter Seven

Love

Objectives

By the end of this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Delineate the categories of love.
- Assess how love is demonstrated in Islam.

The Oxford dictionary defines love as “An intense feeling of deep affection.” Indeed, love is one the strongest and most important emotions. Nations, societies, families, and friendships are built on love. Therefore, love is a necessary ingredient of human life, Nevertheless, there are various types of love, and Islam has something to say about the various categories of love.

Categories of love in Islam, and how love is demonstrated in Islam

1) Love for Allah

The highest level of the love is love for Allah. Indeed, Allah deserves to be loved because He is our Creator, Nourisher, and Sustainer. Moreover, his favours upon His creation are innumerable. He said: **“And if you should count the favors of Allah , you could not enumerate them. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”** [Quran 16: 18]

Love for Allah is demonstrated through worshipping Him, obeying Him, doing what He commanded, and desisting from what He prohibited. Anyone can claim to love Allah but the test of true love is in that person's deeds. If Muslims claim to love Allah, then they should follow the teachings of Muhammad (peace be upon him). Allah said: **“Say, [O Muhammad], ‘If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.’”** [Quran 3: 31].

It is important for a person to love Allah. However, it is more important for a person to make sure that Allah loves him or her, otherwise, that person's actions will be futile. This is through knowing the things through which Allah's love is attained.

Allah's love is attained by supplicating, and asking Him to love the person. This was transmitted in the hadeeth of at-Tirmithi which states: *“One of Prophet David's supplications was: ‘O Allah! I ask You for Your Love, the love of those who love You, and deeds which will cause me to attain Your Love. O Allah! Make Your Love dearer to me than myself, my family and the cold water.’”* [Jaami' at-Tirmithi, hadeeth number 3490].

One of the things through which the love of Allah is attained is trials and tribulations. If a person is tested and bears the test patiently, then Allah will reward that person and love him. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: *“The greatest reward comes with the greatest trial. When Allah loves a people He tests them. Whoever accepts that wins His pleasure but whoever is discontent with that earns His wrath.”* [Sunan ibn Maajah, hadeeth number 4031]

Another hadeeth also states that a person draws closer to Allah by doing the compulsory things. He keeps on getting closer to Allah, and attains His love if he does the optional deeds. The hadeeth states: *“And the most beloved thing with which My servant comes nearer to Me is what I have enjoined upon him, and my servant keeps on coming closer to Me through performing optional acts of worship till I love him.”* [Saheeh al-Bukhaari, hadeeth number 386].

The love of Allah is also demonstrated by loving and revering things of religious value like the Quran, the Ka'bah, Islamic dress, and so on.

The Quran mentions a number of qualities which necessitate Allah's love. Thus, a person should strive to be attain these qualities thereby attaining Allah's love and favour. These qualities are as follows:

1) Repentance: **“Indeed Allah loves those who are constantly repentant.”** [Quran 2:222]

2) Purification: **“Indeed, Allah loves those who are constantly repentant and loves those who purify themselves.”** [Quran 2:222]

3) Piety: **“Surely Allah loves the pious.”** [Quran 9: 4]

4) Doing good: **“And Allah loves the doers of good”** [Quran 3: 148]

5) Putting trust in Allah: **“Certainly, Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him).”** [Quran 3: 159].

6) Patience: **“And Allah loves the patient.”** [Quran 3: 146].

7) Justice: **“Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly.”** [Quran 5:42]

When Allah loves a person, that will be a great honour. Allah will announce His love for this person, and this love will cascade to the earth, and the person will be loved by everyone. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, *“If Allah loves a person, He calls Gabriel saying: 'Allah loves so and so; O Gabriel, love him.' Gabriel would love him, and then Gabriel would make an announcement among the residents of the Heaven, 'Allah loves so-and-so, therefore, you should love him also.' So, all the residents of the Heavens would love him and then he is granted the pleasure of the people of the earth.”* [Saheeh al-Bukhaari, hadeeth number 6040]

2) The love for Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) deserves to be loved because according to Islamic texts, he is the greatest of creation. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: *“I shall be pre-eminent amongst the descendants of Adam on the Day of Resurrection and I will be the first intercessor and the first whose intercession will be accepted (by Allah).”* [Saheeh Muslim, hadeeth number 2278]

Moreover, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has to be loved and appreciated for the knowledge of Islam which he imparted to the Muslims, and the unequalled efforts, and sacrifices that he expended in this regard.

Love for Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is demonstrated in the following ways:

1) Supporting his teachings, promoting them, and calling people to them. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: *“Whoever leads to good is like the one who does it.”* [Jaami’ at-Tirmithi, hadeeth number 2670].

2) Having a desire to be in his company: Although Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) died a long time ago, a person who truly loves him wishes that he could be in his company if he got the opportunity. Al-Qaadi ‘Iyaad stated that part of loving Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is to wish to be in his company even if that involves spending a lot of money. (*Sharh Saheeh Muslim*, 2/16) The Prophet (peace be upon him) himself wished to have seen the Muslims who came after his time. He said: *“Would that I had seen our brothers.” They said: “O Messenger of Allah, are we not your brother?” He said: “You are my Companions. My brothers are those who have not come yet.”* [Sunan an-Nasaai, hadeeth number 150]

3) Following his example: The true test of love lies in doing and complying with what the beloved wants. Otherwise, the claims of love will be hollow.

4) Sending salutations to him: The phrase “sending salutations to Prophet Muhammad” means asking Allah to bless the Prophet (peace be upon him). This act is beloved to Allah, and He rewards people who do it. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: *“If anyone invokes blessings on me once, Allah will bless him ten times.”* [Sunan Abi Dawood, hadeeth number 1530].

5) Avoiding introducing innovations in religions. Innovations are newly-invented religious practices which were not legislated by Allah, or His Messenger (peace be upon him). Allah perfected the religion, and completed it, and Muhammad (peace be upon him) conveyed it fully. Therefore, innovations imply that the religion is deficient. Allah said: **“This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you.”** [Quran 5: 3].

6) Loving his companions, and the members of his family. This is because these are the people who helped the Prophet (peace be upon him) in his mission, and stood by him in happy and sad times.

7) Respecting the Prophet (peace be upon him) and according him his position and status.

3) Love for spouses, family members and relatives

A major type of love is that which exists between spouses, family members and relatives.

a) Love for spouses

Allah has created males and females with a natural attraction and inclination to each other. This attraction is cemented in the marital bond which is based on love and compassion.

Spouses spent a large part of their lives together, and do many things together. This is facilitated by the love which Allah created between them. He said: **“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. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought.”** [Quran 30: 21]

The husband expresses love for his wife through the following ways:

- 1) Telling the wife that he loves her. The Prophet (peace be upon him) expressed his love for his wife ‘Aisha publicly, and when he was asked, *“Who is the most beloved person to you? He said, “’Aisha.”* [Saheeh Muslim, hadeeth number 1593].
- 2) Calling the wife with the names that are beloved to her, pet names, and endearments like sweetheart, darling, honeybunch, and so on. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) used to shorten ‘Aisha’s name, and call her ‘Aish in order to express his love for her. She narrated: *“Once Allah’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said (to me), ‘O ‘Aish! This is Gabriel greeting you.”* [Saheeh al-Bukhaari, hadeeth number 6201]
- 3) Buying gifts for the wife. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: *“Exchange gifts, as that will lead to increasing your love to one another.”* [al-Adab al-Mufrad, hadeeth number 594].
- 4) Providing for the wife’s accommodation, food, dressings, and medical expenses.
- 5) Treating her well in a manner which shows that she is loved
- 6) Advicing her and counselling her when necessary.
- 7) Providing moral support for her.

The wife shows love for her husband in the following ways:

- 1) providing a welcoming and friendly at home.
- 2) respecting him.
- 3) cooking for him his favourite meals. It has been proverbially stated that the way to a man’s heart is through his stomach. However, in Islam a husband can help his wife in the housework. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) would do the household chores, and when it was time for prayer, he would go to the mosque to perform the prayer. (Saheeh al-Bukhaari, hadeeth number 676)

4) cooperating with him and supporting him.

b) love for family members and relatives

Love for family members and relatives is vital because it is based on blood relations. This love consists of the love for one's parents, children, brothers, sisters, and members of the extended family.

This type of love has been emphasized in the Islamic texts. Parents play a key role in the birth of a child. They care, nurture a child, and guide him or her into adulthood. Parents love their children and treat them well because Allah created in them love and mercy for their offspring. This natural instinct is present in animals. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: *“Allah has divided mercy into one hundred parts; and He retained with Him ninety-nine parts, and sent down to earth one part. Through this one part creatures deal with one another with compassion, so much so that an animal lifts its hoof over its young lest it should hurt it.”* [Saheeh al-Bukhaari, hadeeth number 6000] The parents' goodness can never be repaid, and it is priceless. So, appreciation for it is through loving, honouring and obeying them. Allah said: **“And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them 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 honour.”** [Quran 17: 23] The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated that the pleasure of Allah is linked to the pleasure of the parents, and that obedience to parents leads to Paradise. He said: *“The Lord's pleasure is in the parent's pleasure, and the Lord's anger is in the parent's anger.”* [Jaami' at-Tirmithi, hadeeth number 1899] He also said: *“Honouring one's father leads one to enter through the best of the gates of Paradise.”* [Sunan ibn Maajah, hadeeth number 2089]

Love for one's parents is demonstrated by obeying them, honouring them, serving them, giving them gifts, giving them financial help when they need it, caring for them in old age, supplicating to Allah to forgive them after their death, and maintaining good relations with the parents' associates after the death of the parents. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: *“Among the most dutiful of deeds is that a man nurtures relations with the people his father was friends with.”* [Saheeh Muslim, hadeeth number 2552]

A person's brothers and sisters, and members of the extended family are shown love through kindness, compassion, and extending a helping hand at the time of calamity. They

should also be given advice pertaining to issues of the worldly life, and those of the Hereafter. Being kind to one's relatives ensures that a person leads a long life, and he attains blessings in the worldly life. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "*A person who desires ample provisions and that his life be prolonged, should maintain good ties with his blood relations.*" [Saheeh al-Bukhaari, hadeeth number 5986]

c) Love for the rest of mankind

As human beings, we all come from a single source, and that is from our parents Adam and Eve. So, all the human beings on earth are practically one large extended family. Therefore, there is no distinction based on race, colour, and tribe. Rather, the most honourable person in Allah's sight is the most pious. Allah said: "**O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted.**" [Quran 49: 12]. Therefore, a person shows his respect and love for fellow human beings by not harming them, not engaging in anti-social behaviour, acknowledging people's right to differ with him or her, and hold opinions which are contrary to his or her, living peacefully, and exercising tolerance, and forbearance. Moreover, a person should be an asset, and not a burden to the society. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "*The best person is he who is most beneficial to people.*" [al-Mu'jam al-Awsat, hadeeth number 5787]. So, people should help each other in times of calamities, natural disasters, droughts, and they should be good neighbours.

d) Love for animals and inanimate things

The concept of love in Islam is not limited to human beings. Rather, it extends to animals, and inanimate objects. These things share the earth with us, and they deserve to be loved. Being kind to animals, feeding them, and treating them when they are injured shows love for them, and the person who does that attains reward from Allah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "*A woman entered the (Hell) Fire because of a cat which she had tied, neither giving it food nor setting it free to eat from the vermin of the earth.*" [Saheeh al-Bukhaari, hadeeth number 3318]. Moreover, a man was forgiven for giving water to a thirsty dog as was stated in the hadeeth of al-Bukhaari: "*A man felt very thirsty while he was on the way, there he came across a well. He went down the well, quenched his thirst and came out. Meanwhile he saw a dog panting and licking mud because of excessive thirst. He said to himself, "This dog is suffering from thirst as I did." So, he went down the well again and filled his shoe with water and gave it to the dog. Allah thanked him for that deed and forgave him. The people said, "O Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him)! Is there a reward for us in serving the animals?" He replied: "Yes, there is a reward for serving any animate (living being).*" [Saheeh al-Bukhaari, hadeeth 2466]

Rocks, trees, mountains, and similar things are also loved in Islam. These things are part of our environment, and we show love to them by preserving them, and not being wasteful. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “*Uhud² is a mountain which loves us and which we love.*” [*Saheeh Muslim*, hadeeth number 1393]

² This is a mountain in Medina.

Questions

1. Discuss the various categories of love in Islam.
2. Analyse how love is demonstrated in Islam.

Chapter Eight: Rules of behavior

The definition of ethics

Islamic ethics are referred to as *akhlaaq* in Arabic (plural of *khuluq*), and this means character , nature and disposition. The word *akhlaaq* is closely related to the word *Khaaliq* (the Creator), and *makhluq* (the creature). The word *khuluq* was mentioned in the verse of the Quran which states: “**And you (Muhammad) are on an exalted standard of character.**” [Quran 68: 4]

Character (*akhlaaq*) has been referred to as the state of the soul which determines human action. Some character traits are inborn while others are acquired through knowledge, training and practice. Therefore, a good character results in good actions and a bad character results in bad deeds.

Binti Abdul Rahim (2013) postulates that Islamic ethics (*ilm al-akhlaaq* in Arabic) “is a science which deals with ways to maintain virtues at their optimum level, i.e. to avoid wrongdoing and to do what is right and desirable.”

Ethics are very important in Islam because they translate into deeds, and entry into Paradise or Hellfire is based on judging deeds. If a person has more good deeds, he or she will enter Paradise. On the other hand, if the person has more evil deeds, then he or she will be thrown into Hellfire.

Sources of ethics in Islam

Since ethics are related to actions which results in a person’s attainment of reward or deserving punishment, it follows that their source is the Quran, and the Sunnah. Allah is Our Creator and He knows what is best for human beings in terms of behaviour. Therefore, Allah described the best human conduct which should be followed, and He warned believers against evil deeds which they should refrain from. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was a living example of the Quran, and a practical example of Islam. Therefore his deeds, actions, and affirmations guided Muslims to the best practices which should be followed, and they indicated the worst deeds which should be avoided. Sa’d ibn Hishaam ibn ‘Aamir narrated: “*I came to ‘Aisha, and said: “O mother of the believers (a title of*

Aisha), tell me about the character of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). She said: “His character was that of the Quran.”[Ahmad 6/91]

Another source of ethics is the custom (*urf*) of a particular area. This was defined by Kamali (1991) as “recurring practices which are acceptable to people of good nature.” This is the practice of a large number of people. The basis for using *urf* as a source of ethics is that it was adopted by the Muslim jurists as something which is valid and authoritative. This was expressed in the legal maxim which states: “What is proven by *urf* is like what is proven by the proof from the Shariah.”

An example of the derivation of ethics from custom concerns the money which a husband allocates to his wife for her upkeep. This is an obligation. However, the Shariah has not fixed a certain amount for every husband. This differs according to the area, region, the income rate of a particular population, and the rate of inflation. Therefore, \$300 could suffice for a woman in Zimbabwe for example, but the same amount may not suffice in the United States.

However, the *urf* is not used randomly. Therefore, the scholars indicated some conditions for *urf*. Some of them as follows:

1. The custom should represent a common and recurrent phenomenon. Therefore, the *urf* of a few people is not authoritative.
2. The *urf* must not violate Islamic texts. Therefore, customs which violate Islamic texts and principles are not authoritative.

Characteristics of Islamic ethics

1. The Islamic ethics are comprehensive. Therefore, they cover all areas of life and pertain to issues of the worldly life and the Hereafter. Ethics relate to a person’s conduct toward Allah, conduct with fellow human beings and Allah’s creation, and conduct towards oneself. Thus, they are concerned with the individual, the family, and society. Allah said: “**We have sent to you the Qur'an explaining all things.**” [Quran 16: 89]
2. Realistic: Islamic ethics take into account a person’s ability to do an obligation. Thus, Islam does not require people to do the impossible or the unnatural. Allah said: “**Allah burdens not a person beyond his scope.**” [Quran 2: 286] Moreover, people are exempt from religious obligations if they are sick or travelling. Pregnant or suckling women are not required to fast if fasting will harm them or their foetuses. Likewise, it is not compulsory upon a person who is travelling to fast. Similarly, if a person is sick, and

cannot stand, he or she can pray while sitting. If that is not possible, then the person can pray while lying down. If that is also not possible, then the person can pray by making gestures.

3. Moderation or balance: Islam is a religion of moderation. Therefore, human beings are not regarded as angels or animals. Islam recognizes that a human being consists of a body and a soul. Human beings live in this world but they will also live in the Hereafter. So, Islamic ethics cater for all these aspects. They are not only limited to the fulfillment of the bodily desires or the allures of the worldly life, nor do they exclusively focus on the Hereafter. Allah taught the Muslims to make a supplication which covers the life of the world and the Hereafter. This is in the verse which states: “**Our Lord! Give us in this world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good.**” [Quran 2: 201]

Rules of behavior

The rationale behind any kind of a Muslim’s behavior is to please Allah. The reason for the creation of a human being is to worship Allah as was stated in the Quran: “**And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.**” [Quran 51: 56] Therefore, the concept of worship in Islam transcends acts of worship like praying, fasting, giving the poor-due and charity, and performing pilgrimage. Mundane activities like eating, drinking, and working for the family are rewarded if a person does them with the intention to please Allah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “*You will never spend anything that you spend for the sake of Allah, but you will be rewarded for it, even the morsel of food that you put in your wife’s mouth.*” [al-Bukhaari, hadeeth number 56]. Mu’aath said: “I sleep and I get up (to pray at night), and I seek reward for my sleep as I seek reward for my getting up.” [al-Bukhaari, hadeeth number 4088]. So, he sought reward for his sleep just as he sought reward for his getting up to pray at night, because he intended to gain strength by sleeping so as to do acts of worship.

A key aspect in behavior is that a person should not seek to harm others, nor should others want to harm him. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “*There should be neither harm nor reciprocating harm.*” [Sunan ibn Maajah, hadeeth number 2341].

Therefore, a Muslim is required to do good, and benefit others. Allah said: “**And do good that you may be successful.**” [Quran 22: 77]. The believer is supposed to have a positive effect wherever he or she goes. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “**Indeed, the believer is like a bee. It eats what is wholesome, and produces what is good (honey). It lands (on the flower), and does not break it or destroy it.**” [Ahmad, hadeeth number 6272]. In another hadeeth, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “*I have been sent to perfect good moral behavior.*” [al-Bazaar, hadeeth number 8949]

The rules of behaviour in Islam are closely linked to *maqasid ash-shariah* which seek to preserve the individual, the family, and the society. Therefore, any behavior which is detrimental to these things is prohibited, and it is punishable. Thus, murder, rape, theft, adultery, alcoholism, and similar vices are prohibited.

Islam emphasizes on empathy, and sympathy. Therefore, a Muslim is not selfish, and only concerned about his or her own life. Rather, a believer cares about others. The Prophet said: “*The one who sleeps with a full stomach knowing that his neighbour is hungry does not believe in me.*” [*at-Tabaraani*, hadeeth number 754]

A key character trait which is a source of much goodness is truthfulness. This is an essential quality of a Muslim. If a Muslim is devoid of truthfulness, and is a liar, then his or her faith is deficient, and he or she will be on the road to destruction. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: “*Adhere (you people) to truth, for truth leads to good deeds and good deeds lead to Paradise, and if a man continues to speak the truth and makes truth his object he will be recorded as truthful before Allah. Avoid (you people) falsehood, for falsehood leads to wickedness and wickedness leads to Hell, and if a man continues to speak falsehood and makes falsehood his object he will be recorded as a liar before Allah.*” [*Saheeh Muslim*, hadeeth number 2607]

Questions

1. Discuss the sources of ethics in Islam.
2. Examine the rules of behavior in Islam.

Chapter Nine

The status of women in Islam

Objectives

By the end of this chapter the student should be able to:

- Identify the role of women in Islam
- Evaluate the perception of women in Islam

Women are very important in human society. They are grandmothers, mothers, daughters, sisters, wives, and aunts. Numerous texts talk about the value and importance of women, and show that they are held in high regard in Islam. Unfortunately, some people have portrayed Islam as being oppressive to women, and they think that women are denied their rights in Islam. However, the following discussion will dispel that notion.

The role of women in Islam

Women play different roles in society, and these roles were discussed in the Islamic texts. Allah devoted a whole chapter which discusses the issues of women, and this is the fourth chapter of the Noble Quran which is called the Chapter of Women. There are a number of roles in Islam which are as follows:

Motherhood

Allah honoured women by conferring on them the role of motherhood whereby they conceive, carry foetuses in their wombs and then give birth. This role is necessary for the continuation of the human race. Therefore, Allah instructs people to honour and cherish their mothers because of their pivotal role. Allah states: “**And We have enjoined upon man [care] for his parents. His mother carried him, [increasing her] in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years. Be grateful to Me and to your parents; to Me is the [final] destination.**” [Quran 31: 14]

Nurturing children and giving them good values

Women play a major role in nurturing children and giving them good values. The bond between the mother and the child is solid, and she is the first teacher of the child. Thus, she

has to impart good values to the child so that he or she will be beneficial in society. It is a religious requirement for the mother to care for the children well, and teach them what benefits them in this world and the Hereafter. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “*The woman is a guardian and is responsible for her husband's house and his offspring*” [Saheeh al-Bukhaari, hadeeth number 5188].

Consultancy in issues which involve women

Women may be required to their expert opinion on issues relating to women, for example, if there is need for evidence in women issues like virginity, rape, and so on, other women who are experts in those areas can testify. This is because Islam preaches modesty and a woman does not normally expose her body to men (that is, men who are not her husband) unless there is dire necessity like when a woman to examine her cannot be found.

Being supportive spouses

Women have an important role in being supportive spouses. Being a spouse is vital in Islam because when a person gets married, he is deemed to have completed his faith. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “Whoever gets married has completed his faith.” [Mu'jam at-Tabaraani, 8/335]. Wives should give their husbands moral support, and stand by them as they deal with the challenges of life. They may take a leaf from the life of Khadijah, the wife of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) who gave him moral support when he faced opposition from the people of Mecca.

Giving their views on important issues

Women are part of the society. Therefore, they give their views and consultancy on important issues. During the sixth year of Hijrah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) went to Mecca with his companions, and they wanted to perform the smaller pilgrimage (*'umrah*). However, the people of Mecca prevented them from doing that. The situation became tense, but it was diffused by the signing of the Hudaibiyyah pact. Afterwards, the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered his companions to slaughter their animals and shave their heads, and return to Medina. His companions were reluctant to do this. The Prophet (peace be upon him) then informed his wife Umm Salamah about the situation. She advised him not to speak to anyone but to go and slaughter his camel, and his barber so that he would shave his hair. The Prophet (peace be upon him) did this and the people followed his example. So, the advice of Umm Salamah resolved the situation.

Enjoining good and forbidding evil

Muslims strive to have a society which pleases God. This can only happen when people obey Allah, and do not disobey him. This is possible through the role of men and women in advising those who engage in evil deeds to stop doing them, and by encouraging people to do good deeds which please Allah. He said: **“The believing men and believing women are allies of one another. They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong”** [Quran 9: 71].

Doing the household chores

Women do the household chores. However, this role is not limited to women because men can be supportive and help in doing the work of home. In *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, al-Bukhaari transmitted a hadeeth which states: “Hisham said, “I asked ‘Aa’isha, 'What did the Prophet (peace be upon him) do in his house?’ She replied, 'He did what one of you would do in his house. He mended sandals and patched garments and sewed.” [*al-Adab al-Mufrad*, hadeeth number 540].

Perception of women in Islam

Women are viewed very positively in Islam. This is evident in the Islamic rulings, and the textual evidence from the Quran and the Sunnah. Below are examples of issue pertaining to women in which they are regarded positively Islamically.

Men and women are equal

Men and women are equal but they differ in terms of their physical and physiological structure. Therefore, they play different roles in this regard whereby for example, women get pregnant and men cannot naturally get pregnant or breastfeed. In terms of their rights and obligations to Allah; what is required from men is similar to what is required from women. Therefore, Muslim women are required to believe in Allah, pray five times a day, fast in Ramadan, pay zakat, and go for pilgrimage just like men. They get a reward which is similar to that which is given to men. Similarly, the same type of punishments are applied to men and women who break Allah’s laws. Allah said: **“Indeed, the Muslim men and Muslim women, the believing men and believing women, the obedient men and obedient women, the truthful men and truthful women, the patient men and patient women, the humble men and humble women, the charitable men and charitable women, the fasting men and fasting women, the men who guard their private parts**

and the women who do so, and the men who remember Allah often and the women who do so - for them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward.” [Quran 33: 35] So, in Islam women are not regarded as inferior for being women.

The importance of a mother

A mother has a high position in Islam. She gets pregnant for nine months, and faces different types of difficulties and discomfort, and she bears this patiently for the sake of her foetus. She is rewarded by the birth of a child. After that she breastfeeds the child. Naturally, the bond between the mother and child is very strong. Islam recognises the tremendous sacrifice of a mother. Allah says: **“And We have enjoined upon man [care] for his parents. His mother carried him, [increasing her] in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years. Be grateful to Me and to your parents; to Me is the [final] destination.”** [Quran 31: 14] This was also shown in the following hadeeth in *Saheeh Muslim*: *A person came to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and asked, "Who among people is most deserving of my fine treatment?" He said, "Your mother". He again asked, "Who next?" "Your mother", the Prophet (peace be upon him) replied again. He asked, "Who next?" The Prophet (peace be upon him) said again, "Your mother." He again asked, "Then who?" Thereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Then your father."* [Saheeh Muslim, hadeeth number 316] Thus, the hadeeth instructs the child to care for a mother much more than a father.

Caring for the girl child

The girl child is considered important in Islam. Therefore, when she is born, she is considered to be a blessing from Allah. So, Islam treats the birth of the male child and female child equally. The mother is not blamed for giving birth to females because children come from Allah. Allah said: **“To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth; He creates what he wills. He gives to whom He wills female [children], and He gives to whom He wills males. Or He makes them [both] males and females, and He renders whom He wills barren. Indeed, He is Knowing and Competent.”** [Quran 42: 49-50]

A person who gives a good upbringing to a female child is rewarded by entry into Paradise. Aisha narrated: *“A lady along with her two daughters came to me asking me (for some alms), but she found nothing with me except one date which I gave to her and she divided it between her two daughters, and then she got up and went away. Then the Prophet (peace be upon him) came in and I informed him about this story. He said, "Whoever is in charge*

of these daughters and treats them generously, then they will act as a shield for him from the (Hell) Fire.” [al-Bukhaari, hadeeth number 5995]

The dressing code for women

Women in Islam are required to dress modestly by wearing the hijab which is dressing which covers the whole body except the palms, and the face. So, the woman will be wearing loose clothes on her body, and she will be covering her head with a *khimaar* (scarf). Some women go a step further by covering their faces with a face veil known as *niqab* in Arabic. However, according to the majority of the jurists, the *niqab* is not compulsory. This is based on the verses of the Quran and the Sunnah. Allah said: **“And tell the believing women to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things), and protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts, etc.) and not to show off their adornment except only that which is apparent. and to draw their veils all their chests and not to reveal their adornment except to their husbands.”** [Quran 24:31]. He also said: **“O Prophet! Tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to draw their cloaks all over their bodies That will be better, that they should be known so as not to be annoyed.”** [Quran 33: 59] The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: *“O Asma’, when a woman reaches the age of menstruation, it does not suit her that she displays her parts of body except this and this, and he pointed to his face and hands.”* [Sunan Abi Dawood, hadeeth number 4104]

The issue of hijab has been viewed as oppressive in some quarters. Some people argue that the woman is like a flower which should be seen and marvelled at, and it should not be covered. Therefore, an important question is: why do Muslim women wear the veil?

The answer is as follows:

1. Firstly, a Muslim woman wears the hijab in response to Allah’s command. Allah instructed her to do that in the Quran, and she is complying. She is not wearing the hijab to please her father, husband, or brother. Rather, wearing the hijab is an act of worship whose reward comes from Allah.
2. The second reason for wearing hijab is mentioned in Quran 33 verse 59 which states: **“That will be better, that they should be known so as not to be annoyed.”** Therefore, hijab is about the dignity and respect for a woman. By wearing hijab, she is announcing to the world that she is a chaste, and upright woman who deserves to be respected. Therefore, she protects herself from sexual harassment, catcalls, and other forms of unwelcome behavior.

3. Women are multidimensional, and all these dimensions are important. However, whenever a woman wears skimpy clothes, it is only her physical side, and bodily allures which will be prominent. Due to the fact that men are visual creatures, their attention will be drawn to her physical side at the expense of her other attributes. She could be a scientist, an inventor, a writer or a teacher, but when she walks around wearing revealing clothes, no one will think that she has got all those attributes. Therefore, dressing indecently objectifies a woman, and causes others to treat her as a sex object.

Marriage

The rights of a Muslim woman are protected in marriage. Therefore, she is free to marry anyone of her choice. Thus, there is no forced marriage in Islam. A girl came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said: *“My father married me to his brother’s son so that he might raise his own status thereby. The Prophet (peace be upon him) gave her the choice, and she said: “I approve of what my father did, but I wanted women to know that their fathers have no right to do that.” [ibn Maajah, hadeeth 1874]* Therefore, a forced marriage is invalid.

In Islam a woman can take the first step in marriage. If a woman wants to be married to someone she can reach out through intermediaries, and relatives, and the man can be informed about that. This is what Khadijah did in her marriage to Muhammad (peace be upon him). So, a woman is empowered in cases of marriage.

Polygamy

Islam has been criticised for allowing polygamy which is viewed by some as a form of oppression. However, from an Islamic point of view, polygamy is a solution, and not a problem. Islam limited polygamy to four wives. Allah said: **“Then marry those that please you of [other] women, two or three or four. But if you fear that you will not be just, then [marry only] one.”** [Quran 4: 3]

This is because if a person has more than four wives, he will not be able to cater for their physical, financial, and emotional needs. Moreover, polygamy is not for everyone. It is permissible for a person who is physically and financially able to cope with more than one wife. Additionally, these wives must be treated equally, and none of them should be abandoned.

So what is the justification for polygamy? There are a number of reasons which make polygamy a necessity in society:

1. The excess number of women. In some societies and countries, the number of women far outstrips that of men. In the census of 2013 in Zimbabwe, there were 500 000 more

women than men. In the census held in the same year in South Africa, there were one million more women than men. The number is more in other countries of the world. Therefore, polygamy is a way out for the excess number of women who want to be married but cannot find unmarried men for marriage.

2. Polygamy honours women. This is because in a polygamous marriage, the lady is married according to the laws of Islam, and she is known as a wife of that man. Therefore, she gets all the rights that all women married get. Thus, the children grow up in a stable and normal home where they have easy access to both parents. In places where polygamy is unwelcome, there are cases of extra-marital affairs, girlfriends, mistresses, and “small houses.” Such relationships lack commitment from the men involved, and the women do not get the rights that are given to women who are married in the proper manner. At times, the men could deny paternity.

3. Some women are widowed or divorced at a young age. Such women can be married in polygamous unions.

4. If the wife is sick, barren or unable to meet the husband’s needs, the husband can marry another wife who will help in catering for his needs.

5. Men are always ready to have sexual intercourse. However, women cannot have sexual intercourse all the time. When they are menstruating or having post-partum bleeding, they cannot have sexual intercourse. In such cases, if a man has one wife, he may not be able to withstand temptation, and may be inclined to have sex outside marriage. However, this problem is solved by marriage such that when the wife is incapable of having sex, the man can go to the other wife or wives.

Is there a link between polygamy and sexually transmitted diseases?

In Islamic polygamy, the man is supposed to be faithful to his wives, and they must be faithful to him. In this scenario, there will be no sexually transmitted diseases. Muslims have practiced polygamy since the advent of Islam, and the problem of diseases has not arisen. Statistically, the number of such illnesses in Muslim-majority countries where polygamy is practiced are very low. Sexually transmitted diseases only arise when people are having multiple concurrent sexual partners. This is when a man has a number of sexual partners who are not faithful to him. That is a recipe for disaster.

Can a woman be married to more than one man?

Some people are of the view that if a man is allowed to marry more than one woman, then women can also be married to more than one man. However, this is not valid from an Islamic perspective because Allah legislated polygamy, and he did not legislate polyandry (a woman having multiple husbands). Moreover, polyandry has many problems like not being easily able to identify the father of the child, and a husband waiting till the wife delivers the child of the other husband before he can also have a child with her. Moreover, polyandrous marriages are a breeding ground for sexually transmitted diseases unlike polygamy.

Why does Islam allow polygamy when it hurts the feelings of women?

Polygamy may involve a degree of pain, hurt and jealousy especially in the case of the first wife. However, it was legislated because Islam looks at the greater good for the society. When the discomforts brought about by polygamy are compared to the greater evil that will result from the non-application of polygamy, they will be outweighed by them, and the greater good that results from polygamy.

Property rights

Islam gave women the right to own property. Thus a woman could buy or sell property. She was also entitled to a share of the inheritance. However, in the rest of the world, women got their property rights very late. At times, they had to fight hard for these rights. It was only in 1882 that married women in the United Kingdom could own and control property in their own right. This was after the Married Women's Property Act of 1882.

Do women always get half of the inheritance of men?

On the issue of inheritance there is an area which is deemed controversial by some people. This is because Allah stated regarding inheritance: “**Allah instructs you concerning your children: for the male, what is equal to the share of two females.**” [Quran 4: 11]. This is raised as an issue of injustice whereby the males get double the inheritance of women. However, it should be noted that in Islam men have a financial responsibilities whereas women do not have them. When a father has a daughter in the house, he is required to provide everything for her. Similarly, if a woman is married, the husband must avail all of her needs. Despite having no financial responsibilities a woman still gets a share of the inheritance.

Moreover, a woman does not always get half of the man’s share of the inheritance. Rather she sometimes gets a share which is equal to that of a man like in the case of a mother and father of the deceases if he has left behind a son. The mother and the father each get a sixth of the estate, and the rest is for the son. Likewise half-brothers and half-sisters get an equal share of the inheritance. Allah said: “**And if a man or woman leaves neither ascendants**

nor descendants but has a brother or a sister, then for each one of them is a sixth. But if they are more than two, they share a third” [Quran 4: 12]

Sometimes a woman gets a share of the inheritance which is more than that of a man like when a wife dies and leaves behind the husband and two daughters. The husband will get one-fourth of the estate, and the two daughters will each get a third of the inheritance. Likewise, if a wife dies and leaves behind a husband and one daughter, the husband will get one-quarter of the estate while the daughter one-half of the inheritance plus the remaining quarter.

The right to education

Women have the right to be educated. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “*Seeking knowledge is a duty upon every Muslim.*” [Sunan ibn Maajah, hadeeth number 224]. So, Islam does not deny women the right to be literate and be educated. In the early days of Islam, many women were renowned scholars, and these include ‘Aisha, and Umm ad-Dardaa.

Moreover, the first verses which were revealed in the Quran talked of reading which is an essential part of learning. Muslims are referred to as “the nation of reading” because of that. Allah stated: “**Read! In the Name of your Lord, Who has created (all that exists). He created man from a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood). Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous. Who has taught (the writing) by the pen. He taught man that which he knew not.**” [Quran 96: 1-5]

The right to work

Women are allowed to work in Islam. Thus, they have economic rights which allow them to be productive citizens of the society. However, the scholars have stated some conditions for this type of work which include that it should not compromise her religion or her hijab, and that it does not interfere with her role as a mother and wife. Moreover, there could be professions where the services of women are vital like gynaecology. This is because women may feel much more comfortable being examined by other women because the field deals with the functions and diseases specific to women and girls, especially those affecting the reproductive system. The Quran indicated the importance of work whereby there is a specific time set aside for it. Allah said: “**And We have made the daytime for (earning) a livelihood.**” [Quran 78: 11]

Women in politics

The political rights of women

Manzo (2012) indicated that political rights are: “Those rights shared by individuals under which they participate in governance and administrative affairs at different levels of human endeavours.”

Women were given political space in Islam, and they were not restricted from their rights. There are many examples in the Islamic texts and in history which show women’s participation in political issues. Allah says: **“The believing men and believing women are allies of one another.”** [Qur'an 9: 71] This verse also refers political allegiance whereby men and women help and support each other.

Allah says: **“O Prophet! When believing women come to you to give you the *bay’ah* (pledge), that they will not associate anything in worship with Allah.”** [Qur'an 60: 12] The verse indicates that women participated politically in giving the Prophet the *bay’ah*. This was the pledge of allegiance to affirm that Muhammad (peace be upon him) was the Prophet of Allah, and the head of state who was to be accorded his due rights.

Women could freely discuss issues concerning their lives, and rights with figures of authority. Khawlah the wife of Zayd ibn Thaabit argued with the Prophet (peace be upon him), and expressed her views concerning her matter with her husband. Thereafter, Allah revealed the verse: **“Indeed Allah has heard the statement of her (Khawlah bint Tha’labah) that disputes with you (O Muhammad) concerning her husband (Aws bin as-Samit), and complains to Allah. And Allah hears the argument between you both. Verily, Allah is All-Hearer, All-Seer.”** [Qur'an 58: 1]

In the early days of Islam, women took part in lawmaking. A woman argued with the caliph ‘Umar when he was deliberating on the issue of limiting the bridal gift that is given by groom to his bride on the occasion of marriage. The woman proved her point, and ‘Umar publicly declared, “A woman is right, and ‘Umar is wrong.” (Badawi, 2008)

During the era of the Prophet (peace be upon him) a woman called Samraa bint Nuhayk al-Asadiyyah worked as a market inspector to regulate commercial activity, and to guard public interest.

Moreover, Aisha bint Abi Bakr, the wife of the Prophet (peace be upon him) played a vital role in the growth, development, and the understanding of Islamic jurisprudence. In the Battle of the Camel in 656 CE, she participated by giving speeches, and led an army while riding a camel. (Madeleng, 1974)

Therefore, women's rights in all spheres of life are respected and protected. Thus, Islam does not hinder the progress of women. Rather, it promotes women's progress and well-being.

Questions

1. Discuss the roles of women in Islam
2. Assess the perception of women in Islam.
3. Evaluate the participation of women in public affairs in Islam.

Chapter Ten

Islam and social responsibility

Objectives

By the end of this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Explain the concept of humanitarian service
- Delineate the relationship between jihad and humanitarian service

Humanitarian service

The Oxford dictionary describes humanitarian as “concerned with or seeking to promote human welfare.” Therefore humanitarian services are about helping others. Islam emphasises on the importance of assisting others. The religion teaches that the Muslims are brothers and sisters. Helping others is not limited to Muslims but it extends to people of other faiths.

Religious legislation through which other people are helped

Zakat

Humanitarian services are not limited to personal choice. Rather, at times, helping others is a compulsory duty like in the case of zakat. When a person has the required threshold, he or she must pay zakat to people in a number of categories which include the poor or the utterly destitute, and the needy. In Islamic terminology, the poor are those whose income is below half of their needs, while the needy are those whose income covers more than half of their needs but does not suffice for everything that they require. All these types of people should be assisted.

Moreover, zakat is not a piecemeal solution or a temporary alleviation. Rather, it is a tool for the eradication of poverty from society. Some Muslims jurists were of the view that a poor person must be given sufficient resources to make him rich and self-sufficient (*al-Umm*, 8/256).

During the reign of ‘Umar ibn ‘Abdulaziz who ruled for only two and half years, poverty was completely eradicated such that the zakat distributors could not find any poor person who could receive the zakat. (Ahmad, 2004)

Sadaqah (voluntary charity)

Zakat is compulsory, and it is payable under certain conditions which include meeting the minimum threshold of wealth. Therefore, it cannot be paid by everyone. However, the people who do not meet the requirements to pay zakat but have resources which are excess to their requirements are encouraged to give voluntary charity, and help people. This is considered to be a highly-rewarding act of worship. Prophet Muhammad said: “*A person will be under the shade of his charity on the day of Judgement.*” [*Saheeh ibn Hibbaan*, hadeeth number 3310]

Waqf (Endowments)

Islamically, the *waqf* has been defined as: “A thing which while retaining its substance yields a usufruct and of which the owner has surrendered his power of disposal with the stipulation that the yield is used for permitted good purposes.” (Encyclopaedia of Islam) Thus, endowments fall under the chapter of *sadaqah* but they can be used on a larger scale because they involve large sums of money or resources. These could be in the form of farms, buildings, and profits from businesses which are used for charitable causes.

Kaffarah (expiation)

Islam has legislated expiation for some types of shortcomings. Thus in some instances when a person fails to fulfill the required duties, he or she is required to expiate for that by feeding the poor, or providing clothing for them. So, this religious obligation supports humanitarian services in Islam.

All these Islamic provisions can be used to provide humanitarian assistance in the following ways:

Helping the widows and orphans

In many cases when a father dies, the family will have lost a bread winner. Thus, they will be bereft of a source of income. Thus, the various provisions of Islam which encourage charity, and helping others can be used, and the society and individuals can help the family to be self-reliant. Great rewards have been promised for helping the widows and orphans. The person who supports a widow has been equated to one who fasts during the day, and

stands up in prayer the whole night (*al-Bukhaari*, hadeeth number 6006). Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) also stated that on the day of Judgement, he will be very close to the person who looks after the orphan. (*al-Bukhaari*, hadeeth number 5304)

Natural disasters

From time to time, people are afflicted by natural disasters like droughts, floods, tsunamis, and earthquakes. These disasters lead to great loss of life, and destruction to infrastructure and property. Therefore, Muslims play their part by helping their fellow men who will be in distress.

Education

Those who cannot pay for their education are helped in doing so by believers so that the society will have knowledgeable, and skilled people. It is important to educate children, and the youth because they are future of the society. If they are not educated, they will not contribute positively to the growth of the society.

Provision of water to the people

Access to water is essential to human life. Unfortunately, in some areas people have to travel for long distances to reach water sources. Therefore, the plight of these people is alleviated through the provision of wells, and the sinking of boreholes. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked: “*What kind of charity is best?*” He said: “*Providing drinking water.*” [*Sunan an-Nasaai*, hadeeth number 3666]

Sustainable development

Waqf and charity can be used to fund long-term projects which help the society, and uplift the underprivileged people. Thus, these resources can be used for establishing and maintaining big projects like hospitals, schools, colleges, universities, houses, and farms. Thus, this will not only help the poor but it will spur economic growth.

Jihad and humanitarian service

The concept of jihad which has been erroneously interpreted by some people to exclusively mean military action will be discussed fully in a later chapter. However, the texts of Islam do not link humanitarian services with fighting wars. Humanitarian services involves

making people happy, alleviating their suffering, and empowering them. These are not the objectives of war. Therefore, there is no link between the two.

Activities of charitable organizations in Zimbabwe

There are a number of charitable organizations in Zimbabwe and they include New Hope Charity Trust, Majlisul Ulama, Zakat Fund, and Direct Aid to name but a few. These organizations engage in some of the activities mentioned previously in their desire to follow the teachings of Islam as instructed by Allah in the Quran, and explained by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in the Sunnah.

Therefore, based on Islamic principles, these organisations have assisted the underprivileged in getting medical treatment, education, and skills. They have also provided food to the needy, dug boreholes, and assisted in all ways possible as far as their resources permit.

Questions

1. Evaluate the concept of humanitarian service in Islam.
2. "Islam is against selfishness." Discuss

Chapter Eleven

Islam and governance

Objectives

By the end of this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Explain the Islamic concept of governance
- Assess the challenges of Islamic perceptions of governance

The concept of governance in Islam

It has been said that man is gregarious by nature. Thus people live with others in societies and countries. They need each other for the different services, and benefits which they provide to each other. However, if any society does not have leadership and authority, confusion will reign supreme. In Islam leaders are supposed to provide guidance, and govern according to rules of Islam.

Since Islam covers all aspects of life, it has emphasised on the aspect of leadership and governance. The issue of governance was also discussed by Islamic jurists who wrote books about it. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated that if three people set out on a journey, they should select one of them as their leader. [*Sunan Abi Dawood*, hadeeth number 2608] In fact, the issue of responsibility is highly regarded in Islam such that everyone has a form of responsibility and authority for which he or she will be taken to task. The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "*All of you are guardians and are responsible for your subjects. The ruler is a guardian of his subjects, the man is a guardian of his family, the woman is a guardian and is responsible for her husband's house and his offspring; and so all of you are guardians and are responsible for your subjects.*" [*Saheeh al-Bukhaari*, hadeeth number 5188] So, everyone exercises some form of social responsibility.

The ruler is supposed to act in the best interests of the state and the society. The jurists have a legal maxim which states: "Acting with regards to the subjects is based on benefit." Therefore, whatever is beneficial should be adopted, and whatever is harmful should be discarded. The best example of a ruler and a leader was that provided by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and Muslims should model themselves on his actions in this regard.

Since governance is linked to leadership, I will discuss the qualities of leaders in Islam. Here are some of the qualities of an effective leader:

1. Strength and honesty: A weak and dishonest leader is not of much use. Therefore, a leader must be strong and honest. The Quran states: “**Indeed, the best one you can hire is the strong and the trustworthy.**” [Quran 28: 26]. Therefore, appointment to leadership in an Islamic state should be based on merit.

2. Consulting others: A leader who is selfish and does not listen to good advice will make the wrong decisions. This is because no one knows everything on earth, and a leader needs good advisers, and experts to make good decisions. Allah ordered Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to consult his companions, and He said: “**And consult them in the affairs. Then when you have taken a decision put your trust in Allah.**” [Quran 3: 159]

3. Humility: A humble leader is beloved to the people, and he easily connects with them, and gets their loyalty unlike a proud and boastful leader. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: “*And no one humbles himself before Allah except that Allah will raise him (in status).*” [Saheeh Muslim, hadeeth number 2588]

4. Gentleness: Since the leader has great power and authority there could be a temptation to make this authority felt, and treat people in a rough manner. However, this is not a characteristic of effective leaders. Allah praised the Prophet (peace be upon him) for being gentle to his companions. He said: “**So by mercy from Allah , [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you.**” [Quran 3: 159]

5. Providing innovative solutions: An effective and successful leader is the one who can provide innovative solutions for the problems that are faced by the community. An example of this is that when the Muslims migrated to Medina, some of them were forced to leave their families, and properties in Mecca. The Prophet (peace be upon him) responded by establishing a bond of brotherhood between the emigrant Muslim from Mecca, and the residents of Medina. The people of Medina supported their Muslim brothers financially and emotionally, and they shared what they had unselfishly. Thus, the Prophet (peace be upon him) dealt with the issue of the lack of resources in an innovative and sustainable way.

6. Courage and bravery: A leader should be courageous and brave. This will allow him to lead from the front, and take decisions which are in the best interests of the people. “*The Prophet (peace be upon him) was the best among the people (both in shape and character) and was the most generous of them, and was the bravest of them. Once, during the night, the people of Medina got afraid (of a sound). So the people went towards that sound, but*

the Prophet (peace be upon him) having gone to that sound before them, met them while he was saying, "Don't be afraid, don't be afraid." [Saheeh al-Bukhaari, hadeeth number 6033].

7. Having a vision: A leader must have a vision so as to be able to work towards it, and attain success. Prophet Muhammad's goal was to invite people towards the worship of one true God, and he expended all his efforts in attaining this goal. He succeeded in doing so through Allah's mercy and help.

Governance in contemporary Muslim societies

The Muslims of the world are not a monolithic block. Rather, they are diverse in their locations, languages, food, customs, and systems of governance. Therefore, some countries have a traditional monarchy style of governance, while others are constitutional monarchs. Some Muslim countries have adopted democracy, and they are governed as democratic states.

Questions

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

Chapter Twelve

The concept of *jihad*

Objectives

By the end of this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Explore the meaning of jihad
- Evaluate the importance of jihad

The meaning of *jihad* and the type of *jihad*

The word *jihad* has attracted a lot of controversy, and misunderstanding about Islam. It has led to a negative portrayal of the Muslims. This has been partly due to the fact that the word *jihad* has been mistranslated in English dictionaries. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines *jihad* as “holy war.” This definition is totally wrong because the concept of a “holy war” does not exist in Islam. The Arabic equivalent of “holy war” is *ḥarb muqaddas*, and that term does not exist in any Islamic texts. In any case, the true meaning of an Arabic word like jihad can only be found in an Arabic dictionary. The Arabic dictionaries define jihad as to “exert the utmost, to strive, to expend one’s best efforts.” (*an-Nihaayah fee Ghareeb al-Hadeeth wa al-Athar*,1/319).

The unfortunate translation by the English dictionary gives the impression that jihad is limited to warfare. However, that is far from the truth. Ibn al-Qayyim mentioned several types of jihad which are *jihad an-nafs* (*jihad* against one’s self), *jihad ash-Shaytaan* (*jihad* against the devil), and warfare. He went on to say:

“*Jihad an-nafs* (*jihad* against one’s self) is of four kinds:

- 1 – Striving to learn the teachings of Islam.
- 2 – Striving to make oneself act in accordance with what one has learned. Simply knowing without acting, even though it may not cause any harm, is not going to bring any benefit.
- 3 – Striving to call others to Islam, and teaching those who do not know about it.
- 4 – Striving to bear patiently the difficulties involved in calling people to Allah and the insults of people; bearing all that for the sake of Allah.

If a person achieves all these four levels, then he will be one of the *rabbaaniyyeen* (learned men of religion who practice what they know and also preach to others).

Jihad against the devil is of two types:

- 1 – Warding off the doubts that he stirs up to undermine faith.
- 2 – Striving against him to ward off the corrupt desires that he provokes.

The first jihad is followed by certainty of faith, and the second is followed by patience. Allah said: “**And We made from among them (Children of Israel), leaders, giving guidance under Our Command, when they were patient and used to believe with certainty in Our Ayaat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.)**” [Qur'an 32:24] (*Zaad al-Ma'aad*, 3/159)

The concept of jihad can be extended to cover everything which a person strives to do well. A man passed by the Prophet (peace be upon him), and the companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) saw his strength and activeness, and they said: “*Would that he was fighting in Allah’s cause (jihad). The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “If he has gone out striving for his young children, then he is in the path of Allah. If he has gone out striving for his elderly parents, then he is in the path of Allah. If he has gone out striving for himself, then he is in the path of Allah. If he has gone out for show-off, then he is in the path of the devil.”* [at-Tabaraani, 19/129] Thus, an ordinary task like working and seeking a livelihood to sustain oneself, one’s children, and parents is considered to be *jihad*.

Jihad also involves warfare. However, the declaration of warfare is the prerogative of the head of a Muslim state who may after consultation decide to engage in warfare for the best interests of the country. So, jihad is an instrument through which the Islamic state can preserve itself if the need arises. Warfare is not child’s play whereby some people buy guns or bombs and start slaughtering people in the name of religion. That is not what Islam teaches, and nothing of that sort was mentioned in the Islamic texts.

Does Islam support terrorism?

Islam has often been portrayed as the religion of war, suicide bombers, and wanton killing. However, this is not what is reflected in the Islamic texts. Human life is protected, and unjust killing is prohibited. It is a major sin. Serious types of punishments have been legislated for a murderer. Whoever kills one person unjustly it is as if he has killed the entire humanity, and whoever saves one person’s life, it is as if he has saved the life of the entire humanity. [Quran 5: 32]

However, the question which naturally arises is that why do extremist groups like Boko Haram, Al-Qaidah, Al-Shahab exist, and fight in the name of Allah? The answer is that Islam is defined by what is stated in the Quran and the Sunnah, and not the wrong actions

of people. Therefore, the Islamic texts are against terrorism and murder. So, that is the position of Islam on the matter. The extremist groups are a tiny minority who account for less than one percent of the Muslim population. The majority of the Muslims live their life in a normal, and peaceful manner, and they are not a threat to anyone. The extremist groups and organizations do not fight for the sake of Allah. This is because they have been known to declare other Muslims as apostates, and to attack them in mosques, and homes. Thus, they fight for economic, political or other agendas which are best known to themselves.

Questions

1. "The concept of jihad has been greatly misunderstood." Discuss

2. Evaluate the importance of jihad.

Chapter Thirteen

Islam and conflict transformation

Objectives

By the end of this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Explain conflict transformation
- Illustrate the modes of conflict transformation in Islam

The meaning of conflict transformation

Johannes Botes defined conflict transformation as “the process of moving from conflict-habituated systems to peace systems.” So, we can say that the terms refers to the avoidance of conflict, and establishing peace.

The modes of conflict transformation in Islam

The Islamic texts have mentioned a number of conflict transformation mechanisms which are as follows:

1- Signing truces: In the sixth year after Hijrah, the Muslims wanted to perform the lesser pilgrimage (*‘umrah*) but they were prevented from entering Mecca by the Quraish. The situation became tense because both sides were armed, and were not easily intimidated. However, the situation was saved when the two sided agreed to conclude a treaty which suspended war for ten years. Unfortunately, the truce was broken by the Quraish within two years, but at the time of its signing bloodshed was averted.

2-Agreements and treaties: When Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) arrived in Medina, he concluded a treaty with the Jews. His outlook was peaceful, and he did not pursue the politics of war, expulsion, hostility, or the seizure of land and property.

3-Reconciliation: When people differ, and reach the point of fighting, further damage can be prevented if they are reconciled, and encouraged to seek a peaceful solution. Allah said: “**And if two parties or groups among the believers fall to fighting, then make peace between them both.**” [Quran 49: 9]

4-Arbitration: An important way of maintaining peace and good relations is through arbitration. In this case two people are chosen as arbitrators, and mediate between disagreeing people or warring factors. This can be in the case of individuals like a husband and wife where marital disputes are solved by arbitrators. Allah said: “**And if you fear dissension between the two, send an arbitrator from his people and an arbitrator from her people. If they both desire reconciliation, Allah will cause it between them. Indeed, Allah is ever Knowing and Acquainted [with all things].**” [Quran 4: 35].

The principle of arbitration is also applicable when two groups of people fight. During the reign of caliph ‘Ali, a war broke out between ‘Ali, and Mu’awiyah and their followers. After lives were lost, the warring factions agreed to appoint arbitrators to seek a peaceful solution. ‘Amr ibn al-‘Aas and Aboo Moosa al-Ash’ari were chosen as the arbitrators.

5-Forgiveness: Loss of lives through fighting and war can be prevented by forgiving the wrongdoers. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was persecuted in Mecca, and his followers experienced untold suffering. However, when he gained control of Mecca, he addressed the Quraish saying: “O you people of Quraish! What do you think of the treatment that I am about to accord you?” They replied: “O noble brother and son of a noble brother! We except nothing but goodness from you. He said: “I speak to you in the same words as Yusuf (Prophet Joseph) spoke to his brothers. He said: ‘No reproach on you this day,’ go your way, for you are free.” (Mubarakpuri,2002).

Similarly, while the Prophet (peace be upon him) was in Mecca, he decided to call the people of the surrounding areas to Islam. Thus, he went to Taif, and invited the people to Islam. However, these people responded rudely, and they harassed the Prophet (peace be upon him). He was saddened, and returned to Mecca. On his way back, the angel Gabriel came and told him that Allah had sent an angel of the mountains who was ready to let the mountains fall on the people of Taif, and crush them as punishment for their hostility. However, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: *“No. I hope that Allah will let them beget children who will worship Allah alone, and they will worship none besides Him.”* [Saheeh al-Bukhaari, hadeeth number 3231]. The Prophet’s (peace be upon him) desire materialized because a few years later, the people of Taif became Muslims, and today it is a thriving city populated by Muslims.

6-Interfaith dialogue: Interfaith dialogue fosters understanding of the different beliefs of different people. This promotes peaceful coexistence, and acceptance that people differ in their beliefs, languages, and cultures, and that these differences do not mean that people should fight. During the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) early days in Medina, he was visited by the Christians of Najran, and they discussed issues of religion. These discussions were joined by the Jews later on. (Ibn Ishaq, 2010) The Quran calls for dialogue, and peaceful debate and discussion, and it states: **“Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best.”** [Quran 16: 125].

7-Education: Educating people in general empowers them, and broadens their thinking. Religious education focuses on pleasing the Creator, benefiting others, and being a useful and responsible citizen. Teaching people about peace and tolerance will go a long way in ensuring that people live harmoniously, and avoid conflict. Mercy is an essential element in a believer. A merciful person has no time to plot harm and destruction against his fellow

men. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “*Show mercy to people on earth so that Allah who is in heaven will have mercy on you.*” [Sunan Abi Dawood, hadeeth number 4941].

Questions

1. Discuss the modes of conflict transformation in Islam
2. “Islam has no mechanisms for conflict transformation.” Discuss

Chapter Fourteen

Islam and marriage

Objectives

By the end of this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Evaluate the meaning of marriage in the Quran
- Assess the importance of marriage in Islam
- Explain the causes of divorce in Islam

The linguistic meaning of marriage

Marriage is referred to as *nikaah* in Arabic. The word has two meanings:

- 1) the marriage contract
- 2) sexual relations.

The technical meaning of marriage

Zarabozo (no date) quoted Muhammad Abu Zahrah to have defined marriage as:” A contract that results in a man and woman living with each other and supporting each other within the limits of what has been laid down for them in terms of rights and obligations.”

The importance of marriage

Marriage is a very important institution in society. It is the building block of the society. Strong marriages and families translate into a strong and vibrant society. Weak families result in a feeble society. A child’s first interaction with the world begins at home when he or she is around the mother and father. Therefore, the values that are inculcated at home play a key role in shaping the character of the child as he or she grows up.

Marriage is a wholesome way in which people fulfill their sexual desires. When people reach a certain age, they naturally develop interest in the opposite sex. This interest and desire is channeled to the institution of marriage which results in the family unit. Fulfilling sexual desires outside marriage is prohibited in Islam, and leads to children who are born outside wedlock. These children face a lot of challenges in that they often do not get the appropriate care, attention, and upbringing.

When people get married, they perpetuate the human race by bearing children. Moreover, children born in marriage are easily attributed to the father and mother, and this protects lineage. Marriage is crucial because there are rights which are due to the children, and they inherit their parents.

Marriage is an institution which allows males to express their love and affection to females and vice versa. This was stated in the Qur'an where Allah said: **“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. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought.”** [Quran 30: 21]

Marriage in the Islamic texts

Since marriage is a vital aspect of human life, it was described in the Islamic texts. In the Quran, Allah indicated that human beings were created out of the union of Adam and Eve. He said: **“O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women.”** [Quran 4: 1]

Allah instructed husbands to treat their wives well. He said: **“And live with them honourably. If you dislike them, it may be that you dislike a thing and Allah brings through it a great deal of good.”** [Quran 4: 19]. This verse also instructs husbands to be tolerant of their wives. They should not rebuff their wives because of a few negative traits when the majority of the characteristics are good. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: *“A believer must not hate (his wife) believing woman; if he dislikes one of her characteristics he will be pleased with another”*. [*Saheeh Muslim*, hadeeth number 1468] Moreover, the Prophet (peace be upon him) taught Muslims to be sensitive, and respect the feelings of others. Therefore, he never criticised any food that was presented to him. If he liked it, he would eat it, and if he did not like it, he would leave it. (*Saheeh al-Bukhaari*, hadeeth number 3563).

Although marriage fulfills a basic human need, it is also considered to be an act of worship in Islam. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: *“Whoever gets married has fulfilled half of his faith. So, let him fear Allah in the remaining half.”* [at-Tabaraani, 8/335]. Therefore, sexual intercourse between spouses entails reward. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: *“And in man's sexual intercourse (with his wife) there is a sadaqah.”* They (the Companions) said: *“O Messenger of Allah, is there reward for him who satisfies his sexual need among us?”* He said, *“You see, if he were to satisfy it with something forbidden, would it not be a sin on his part? Similarly, if he were to satisfy it legally, he should be rewarded”*. [Saheeh Muslim, hadeeth number 1006]

Forbidden marriages

Marriage is very beneficial as indicated in the discussion above. However, certain types of marriages are forbidden because they defeat the purpose of marriage or involve incest by marrying one's close relatives.

Zarabozo (no date) indentified three types of forbidden marriages:

1. *Nikaah ash-Shighaar*: This is the exchange of daughters or sisters for marriage with no mandatory gift to a bride from her groom

2. *Nikaah al-mut'ah*. Any kind of marriage with a stipulated time limit. This is a temporary marriage and it was explicitly forbidden by the Prophet (peace be upon him). Al-Bukhaari (hadeeth number 3979) and Muslim (hadeeth number 1407) transmitted the hadeeth which states that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) forbade the *mut'ah* marriage

3. *Nikaah at-tahleel*: This is when a woman who has been divorced three times (as stipulated by Islamic Law as will be explained later) wishes to return to her first husband, and marries another man on the condition that he will divorce her so that she can return to her original husband.

Other prohibited types of marriages are:

4) Marrying one's close relatives like one's own mother, sister, and so on.

5) Marrying two sisters at the same time, or a woman and her aunt at the same time. This type of marriage destroys the relations between women because of the jealousy that comes with polygamy.

6) Marrying more than four wives. A person who married more than four wives will not be able to fulfill their duties.

7) Marrying a woman who is already married. This is forbidden because it causes hatred, and fights between people. Likewise, proposing to marry a woman whom someone else has proposed to is not allowed. A person can only propose if the earlier proposal has been rejected. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "*None amongst you should outbid another in a transaction, nor should he make proposals of marriage upon the proposal made by someone else.*" [Saheeh Muslim, hadeeth number 1412]

The rights and responsibilities of the spouses in marriage

Islam has legislated some rights and responsibilities which are due to both the husband and wife. If these are maintained and respected the marriage will be successful. Otherwise, it will be a failure.

The wife's rights

The wife has been given many rights in Islam. The most prominent of those are that the husband is responsible for her accommodation, clothing, and sustenance. The husband is required to pay for all these things even if the wife is working or wealthy. If the wife pays for these things, then that will be a voluntary issue, and not compulsory. Allah said: **“The father of the child shall bear the cost of the mother's food and clothing on a reasonable basis.”** [Quran 2: 233]

The wife is not to be subjected to beatings, and physical violence. That is contrary to good treatment. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: *“The best of you do not beat their wives.”* [al-Bayhaqi in *as-Sunan al-Kubra*, hadeeth number 14553]. Moreover, the best example of how Muslims should treat their wives is in the life of Muhammad (peace be upon him). He was not known for wife battering or gender-based violence. Therefore, marital disputes should be solved through dialogue.

The husband's rights

The husband enjoys many rights in Islam. However, the most important role is that his role as the head of the house should be recognised. However, the fact that the husband is the head of the house does not mean that he should not listen to his wife at all. The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to consult his wives on major issues. After the Hudaibiyyah truce, the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered his companions to slaughter their animals and shave their heads thereby indicating that they had abandoned their pilgrimage, and would come back to Mecca to perform it the following year but the companions were reluctant to follow his instructions. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told his wife Umm Salamah about the issue. She told him not to speak to anyone but to go, and slaughter his camel, and instruct a barber to shave his head. He did that, and the people hastily followed his example. Therefore, Umm Salamah's opinion provided a very effective solution in this case.

Divorce

Divorce is the dissolution of the marital bond. Marriage is supposed to be a long-term issue. Ideally its end should be when one of the spouses or both of them die. However, in life it is not always possible to attain the ideal. Thus, there are some circumstances in which divorce is allowed despite the negative things which result from it. Some of the

disadvantages are the breakdown of the family, the loss of a mother or a father figure for the children. Moreover, if the spouses remarry, the new husband or wife may not have a smooth relationship with the children.

However, divorce is a very serious issue with far-reaching consequences in Islam. So, a person has to think well before taking the step. Therefore, in Islam it is not an automatic thing whereby a man tell his wife, "Pack and go," after a quarrel. Rather, the jurists, based on the Quran and Sunnah have set the guidelines for divorce which are that a man can only divorce his wife after her menstrual periods if he has not had sexual intercourse with her. Thus, he issues one divorce by saying, "I divorce you," or using similar phrases. However, the wife does not leave the marital home immediately. Rather, she keeps on staying in that house. If she has her periods again, and becomes clean, the man can issue the second divorce if he is no longer interested in his wife. This process is repeated for the third time. When the man issues the third divorce, the wife is irrevocably divorced from him, and he cannot marry her unless if she marries someone else and gets divorced.

The reason for this process is to give both parties time for reflection and reconsideration. A divorce may be issued in anger. However, after reflection the man may decide to take back his wife. This is possible within the first two utterance of divorce. The wife could have been divorced because of some negative traits. After one or two utterances of divorce, she may change her behavior, and win her husband's favour.

The authority to pronounce the divorce lies with the man. However, the man can delegate this power to the woman if he so wishes. This can be stated when the marriage is concluded. Thus, whenever the woman wants to end the marriage, she can do so. Another way wherein the woman initiates the decision to end the marriage is *khul'*. In this case, she requests to end the marriage on the condition that she gives the man back his bridal gift (*mahr*), or any precious gifts that she may have received. Therefore, the woman is not forced to stay in a union which is not good for her.

The reasons for divorce

There are a number of reasons which lead to the breakdown of marriage. A couple may have love for each other but they will not be compatible for each other. This may lead to loss of harmony in the family, and this causes divorce.

Another reason for divorce is infidelity. If both spouses or one of them engages in extramarital affairs, this causes distress to the spouses, and a loss of trust which results in divorce.

With the passage of time, some marriages are susceptible to loss of love and affection. Therefore, in such a situation it is not conducive to force those people to stay together. Thus, an outlet of divorce has been provided for such people.

A successful marriage is one in which both spouses are happy, relate well to each other and treat each other well. However, when there is bad treatment by one spouse, or mutual bad treatment, the marriage cannot be sustained. This also involves the wife and the husband or one of them neglecting the rights of the other, or not fulfilling their responsibilities. This could also include violence perpetrated by one of the spouses on the other or mutual violence.

Hygiene, and deportment are essential in keeping the spark alive in marriage. When people become lax in this regard, this may cause aversion between the spouses leading to divorce.

Questions

1. Assess the importance of marriage in Islam.
2. Discuss the cause of divorce in Islam.

3. Examine how the Islamic texts discussed marriage.

Chapter Fifteen

Islamic and the natural environment

Objectives

By the end of this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Identify the sources of Islamic environmental practice
- Explain the principles of environmental preservation in Islam

Definition of the environment

The Business Dictionary defines the natural environment as “climate, weather, and natural resources that affect human survival and economic activity.” The natural environment is important because it is an essential component of life with multiple benefits for us, our progeny, and future generations.

Due to the fact that Islam is a comprehensive religion, it addresses issues relating to the natural environment. Thus, the Quran and the Sunnah have texts which instruct Muslims on how to deal with the environment. So, the principles of dealing with the environment are in the Quran and Sunnah.

The sources of Islamic environmental practice

The main sources of Islamic environmental practice are the Quran and the Sunnah. The Quran gave guidelines of everything in life, and this includes issues pertaining to environmental practice. Allah said: “**We have not neglected anything in the Book.**” [Quran 6: 38] The Sunnah explains the Quran. Thus, it also discussed matters of preserving the natural environment.

Another source of environment practice is the advice of the experts in the field. Their counsel is authoritative before it is based on study and research.

Principles for preserving the natural environment

The natural environment is a favour which Allah bestowed on human beings to enjoy and benefit from. Allah said: “**It is He who created for you all of that which is on the earth.**” [Quran 2:29]. Allah also said: “**And He has subjected for you the night and day and the sun and moon, and the stars are subjected by His command. Indeed in that are signs for a people who reason.**” So, the natural environment has been subjected by Allah for the use of human beings.

Therefore, the natural environment is a trust from Allah. All trusts must be used responsibly, and in a manner which shows gratitude. This is because if people are ungrateful, Allah will withdraw His blessings. However, if people are grateful, Allah will increase his blessings. He said: “**And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you**

are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]; but if you deny, indeed, My punishment is severe.” [Quran 14: 7]

Some resources from the environment are renewable while others are non-renewable. Both resources must be used economically, and they should not be wasted. Wasting resources shows selfishness, and not caring for the future generations. The Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered Muslims to be frugal when using water even if they are making ablution³ in a river. Allah said: **“And be not excessive. Indeed, He does not like those who commit excess.”** [Quran 6: 141] The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: *“The Messenger of Allah passed by Sa'd when he was performing ablution, and he said: 'What is this extravagance?' He said: 'Can there be any extravagance in ablution?' He said: 'Yes, even if you are on the bank of a flowing river.”* [Sunan ibn Maajah, hadeeth number 425].

Islam instructs Muslims to preserve the natural environment by adopting hygienic practices. Unsanitary behaviour spoils the natural resources such that all the people will be prevented from benefiting from them. In this regard, the Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade people from urinating in stagnant water (*Saheeh Muslim*, hadeeth number 423).

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also forbade people from urinating on the pathways, and in places where people seek shade. This habit is unsanitary, and offends people. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: *“Fear the two things that bring curses. They asked, What are the two things that bring curses, O Messenger of Allah? He said: When a person relieves himself in the road where people walk or in the place where they seek shade.”* (*Sunan Abi Dawood*, hadeeth number 23)

When dealing with the natural environment a person should not only be a consumer who is concerned with using the resources, benefiting from them, and depleting them. Rather, he or she should be proactive and engage in activities which enhance sustainability like planting trees and crops. Doing so preserves the environment, and entails receiving reward from Allah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: *“If a Muslim plants a tree, or sows a field and men and beasts and birds eat from it, all of that is charity from him”*. [*Saheeh Muslim*, hadeeth number 1552]

Planting crops is an important activity, and the hadeeth emphasized that it should be done even when the world is about to end. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: *“If the Final Hour comes while you have a palm-cutting in your hands and it is possible to plant it before the Hour comes, you should plant it.”* [Ahmad, hadeeth number 12902].

³ Washing the parts of the body like the hands, face and feet before prayer. In Arabic this is known as wuthoo’.

Questions

1. Identify the sources of Islamic environmental practice.
2. Explain the principles of environmental preservation in Islam.

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