

CHIEF CHARACTERISTICS OF ISLAM

1. **Simplicity:** Islam is a religion without any mythology. Its teachings are simple and intelligible. It is free from superstitions and irrational beliefs. There is no priesthood, no farfetched abstractions, no complicated rites and rituals. Everybody can approach the Book of God directly and translate its dictates into practice.

Jean L'henreua says:

"Islam has the power of peacefully conquering soul by the simplicity of its theology, the clearness of its dogma and principles and the definite number of practices which it demands."

2. **Rationality:** Islam awakens in man the faculty of reason and exhorts him to use his intellect. Quran is a book of Wisdom; it never asks us to believe without giving the rationale of that belief. It enjoins man to see things in the light of reality. Islam advises man to pray: "O, my Lord! Advance me in knowledge." It asserts that those who have knowledge are not equal to those who have. Those who do not observe and understand are worse than cattle. The Prophet of Islam said: "He who leaves home in search of knowledge walks in the path of God." And "Quest for knowledge is a duty for every Muslim- man and woman.
3. **Practicalism:** Islam is a practical religion and does not indulge in empty and futile theorizing. It says that faith is not a mere profession of belief; rather it is the very mainspring of life. Quran says: "Those who believe and act righteously, joy is for them and a blissful home to return to." Our Holy Prophet remarked: "God does not accept belief, if it is not expressed in deeds; and does not accept deeds, if they do not conform to belief."
4. **Unity of Matter and Spirit:** Of all the religious systems, Islam alone declares that individual perfection is possible in our earthly existence. Islam does not postpone this fulfillment until after a suppression of the so called 'bodily' desire, as the Christian teachings do, nor does Islam make hollow promise of a continuous chain of rebirths on a progressively higher plane, as in the case with Hinduism; nor does Islam agree with Buddhism, according to which perfection and salvation can be attained through annihilation of the individual self and its emotional links with the world. On the other hand Islam holds that spiritual salvation is to be achieved by living piously in the rough and tumble of life and not by renouncing the world. Quran exhorts man to ask:
"Our Lord! Give us the good in this world and the good in the hereafter."
Our Prophet once remarked:
"A Muslim who lives in the midst of society and bears with patience the afflictions that come to him is better than the one who shuns society and cannot bear any wrong done to him."
5. **A Complete Code of Life:** Islam wants to transform the life of this world with all its dimensions into a life of the 'worship of God' by channelizing it into a 'system of obedience to God.' Therefore, Islam provides guidance in all walks of life- individual and social, material and moral, economic and political, legal and cultural, national and international. The Quran enjoins man 'to enter the fold of Islam without any reservation and to follow God in all fields of life.' It does not endorse the dualistic philosophy of "Give to God what is God's and to Caesar what is Caesar's", because everything belongs to God and nothing- absolutely nothing- belongs to Caesar- in fact, to any creature.
6. **Universality:** The message of Islam is for the entire human race. God, in Islam, is the God of all the world and the Prophet is a Messenger for the whole of mankind. Quran says:
"O people! I am the Messenger of God to you all."
"We have not sent you but as a (source of) mercy for all the nations."
Duncan Greenless writes in "The Gospel of Islam",
"The nobility and broad tolerance of this creed which accepts as God-inspired all the real religions of the world will always be a glorious heritage of mankind. On it could indeed be built a perfect world religion."
7. **Humanism:** In Islam all men are equal, whatever be their colour, language, race or nationality. Islam addressed itself to the conscience of humanity and banishes all false barriers of race, status and wealth.

Quran says:

"All creatures of God form the family of God and he is best loved by God who loves best His creatures."

"Respect God and be affectionate to the family of God."

Toynbee writes in "The Civilization on Trial",

“The extinction of race consciousness between Muslims is one of the outstanding moral achievements of Islam, and in the contemporary world there is, as it happens, a crying need for the propagation of this Islamic virtue.”

8. **A Dynamic Religion:** The elements of permanence and change coexist in human society and culture and are bound to remain so. Too much emphasis on permanence makes the system rigid and robs it of flexibility and progress. While lack of permanent values and unchanging elements generates moral relativism, shapelessness and anarchy. What is needed is a balance between the two. As an American judge Mr. Justice Cardozo remarked, “

“The greatest need of our time is a philosophy that will meditate between conflicting claims of stability and progress and supply a principle of growth.” Islam fulfils this need.

In Quran, God has revealed only broad principles and has endowed man with the freedom to apply them in every age in the way suited to the spirit and conditions of that age. It is through the Ijtihad that people of every age try to implement and apply divine guidance to the problems of their times. It is this characteristic of Islam which makes him “The Religion of Future”.

9. **Conclusion:**

Fasting

1) **Introduction:** The institution of fasting is one of the main pillars of the edifice of Islam; for it is through this divinely ordained exercise that each individual, nay the Muslim nation as a whole, attains moral reformation and spiritual elevation as well as social training.

2) **Meaning:** In Arabic vocabulary, Fasting means to stop work, including eating, drinking, speaking and moving. But in Islamic terminology it means willful abstention from eating, drinking, copulation and voluntary vomiting by Muslim adult who is mentally normal from dawn to sun set.

Meaning

Also the word Ramzan is derived from the root "Ramz" which means "to burn". So etymologically the term "Ramazan" implies that it is a great burner and destroyer of the sins of those who observe fast.

Ramz

3) **Fasting in other Religions:** Although Fasting was prevailing even before Islam, but besides duration and methods, its purposes were also totally different. In some religions it was a sign of mourning, in others a mode of self-denial while in still other an act to appease an angry god. Islam made a fasting a fool-proof, abiding measure to acquire moral discipline which has been named in the Quran as Taqwa (righteousness).

Quran says: "O believers! Fasting is enjoined on you, as it was enjoined on those before you, so that you may learn self-restraint"

4) **Islamic aim: (or importance)**

a) **Attainment of TAQWA:** The main objective of Fasting is to acquire Taqwa (the fear of Allah). Piousness (Taqwa) is the name of that profound care for saving ourselves from the displeasure of Allah which urges one for virtue and dissuades one from vice.

Quran says: "But as for him who feared to stand before his Lord and restrained his soul from lust. Lo! The Garden will be his home".

Fasting trains us in controlling our instincts by neither smothering them altogether nor giving them a free reign. We are therefore able to control our desires and instincts instead of being controlled by them.

Holy Prophet says: "Fasting is a shield for you, as it saves you from sins in this world and would protect you from hell in the Hereafter."

b) **Increases Patience:** Ramzan is a month of patience. Every Muslim during the Holy month has to observe utmost patience in adversity, steadfastness in deprivation and to increase one's power of resistance. Fasting enables us to face hardships of life - by renouncing everyday comforts; we give strength to our resolve and increase power of resistance. Commenting on Siyam, Imam Ghazali in his book "Ihya-ul-Ulum" writes 'Fasting is one-fourth of faith', as the Prophet said: "Fast is half of patience and patience is half of faith".

an immunity from evil.
Satan keeps
fanning the
the heart
to ignite
the carnal
desires of
the Nafs
+ Nafs is the
production of
this earthly world
Soul is heavenly
Nafs reaches for
worldly things
by hook or by
crook

c) **Establishes Human Dignity:** Fasting sanctifies the human personality; it cuts the carnal self to its size; brightens and heightens human virtues, reactivates pious resolves, infuses order, obedience, and responsibility, enriches the soul and purifies the body thereby influencing the personality of a Muslim.

d) **Attains Self Reformation:** The most significant aspect of fasting is the reformation of the "self" through conscious management of the "self". It is the process, which is to receive our utmost attention, whilst we engage in fasting. If this objective is not achieved, then fasting would be a ritual without a purpose. The object is to make our behavior symbolic of the virtues attending to fasting such as mercy, generosity, truthfulness, endurance, patience and fortitude.

In the final analysis, fasting erases from the believing soul every evil, it perfects and liberates the human spirit and directs it towards common welfare, thus helping in the establishment of a righteous and stable society.

5) **Benefits:**

i) **Individual:**

a) **Character Building.** Fasting teaches a man moral discipline through training during the month of Ramzan. It is through fasting he suffers and undergoes trials of hunger and thirst day in and day out for a full month. He abstains from indulgence in even the Halal things like food, water and woman. How can he then touch Haram things after undergoing this kind of training? Commenting on the moral dimension of fasting, Maulana Mohammad Ali Jauhar in his book "The Religion of Islam", writes; "There is also a moral discipline underlying fasting for it is the training ground, where man is taught the greatest moral lesson of his life life - the lesson that he should be prepared to suffer the greatest privation and undergo the hardest trial than indulge in what is not permitted to him.

b) **Practice of Obedience.** Fasting makes a man to obey the injunctions of Shariah without breaking for a long period of time. For a whole month, a Muslim is tied up to the rules and regulations like a soldier in an army and then he is released for eleven months so

that the training received in one month shows its effects. And if any deficiency is left, it may be rectified in the next year.

c) A sign of Firm Faith in Allah. A Muslim does not eat, drink or smoke even stealthily in the severest summer and undergoes rigorous discipline during the month of Ramzan because of his faith in God, and for His Love and for the fear of His punishment. This continuous rigorous discipline strengthens one's faith in Allah and makes one sincere, faithful and obedient to His command.

ii) Collective or Social:

a) Creates sympathy and fellow feeling. Since the rich are made to experience the pangs of poverty for one month continuously, the practical experience and feeling creates in them a determination for the amelioration of the poor. In this was fasting develops in them the spirit of sympathy and spending in the way of Allah. For this reason the Prophet has regarded the month of fasting as "the month of sympathy".

b) Fasting: an institution of equality. Fasting strengthens the sense of equality. During the month of the fast all members of the Muslim society, the rich and the poor, the ruler and the ruled, the elite and the ordinary share an equal share of obedience. They are the slaves of One Master and subject to Him in equal degrees. This state of mind purges them of all their notions of rank and status and gives a complexion of equality to the whole society.

c) Unity of Muslim Ummah. The method laid down for the fast requires that every Muslim throughout the world should observe the fast in the prescribed month (Ramzan); this intensifies the feeling of Muslim unity and brotherhood. It constantly reminds them of their being the flag bearers of one mission.

Finality of Prophethood

1. **Meaning:** Khatim-al-Nabiyeen stands for finality of Prophethood. According to Arabic lexicon and linguistic usage of "Khatam" is to affix seal, to close, to carry something to its ultimate end. When the seal is affixed on an envelope or on a document then nothing can be added to it. Any such thing becomes impossible.

Thus when Allah designates the Prophet Muhammad as the seal of all Prophets, it is an expressed declaration that the Prophethood is now closed and this last of the Prophets is being sent with Divine Message till the day of Resurrection and no one will be sent as Prophet after him. Allah has revealed this fact in the Holy Quran:

"But he is the Messenger of Allah and the last of the Prophets."

Prophet himself on various occasions in unequivocal words said:

"With me the edifice of the Prophethood has been complete and with me the chain of Prophethood has come to and end."

"I have been sent to all creation and I am the last of the Prophets."

2. **Logical Proof:** There are four conditions which necessitate the advent of a new Prophet:

b) That the teachings of the earlier prophets have been interpolated and their revival is needed. In such a case a new prophet is raised so that he may purge the impurities from the lives of the people and restore the religion to its pristine purity and form.

c) That the teachings of the prophet who passed away were incomplete and it is necessary to amend them, improve upon them, or add something to them; then a new prophet is sent to effect these improvements.

d) That the earlier prophet was raised particularly for a certain nation or territory and a prophet is needed for another nation or country.

e) That there was need for a second prophet to share the responsibility of office with the first prophet.

3) **Analysis of the present situation:**

1) The teachings of the last Prophet are alive, have been fully preserved because Allah Himself has taken the responsibility of its protection. Quran says:

"Verily, We have revealed the Truth (the Quran) and verily We are its guardians."

Even non-Muslim scholars testify this truth. F.F. Arbuthnot writes in "The Constitution of Bible and the Quran":

"... Original text of the Quran has remained the same throughout the ages without any change or alterations by enthusiasts, translators and interpolators. It is to be regretted that the same can not be said about the Old Testament and New Testament."

2) The guidance that has been shown unto mankind is complete and flawless and is enshrined in the Holy Quran. Quran says:

"Today I have perfected your religion for you and completed my bounty upon you and have chosen for you al-Islam as the religion."

3) The Message of Muhammad was not meant for any particular people, place or period. He was raised as the World Prophet- the messenger of truth for the entire mankind. Quran says:

"Verily (O Muhammad) We have sent you but as a mercy to you all (mankind)."

Observes Hitti in "The Near East in History":

"Moses was a prophet, so were Abraham, Noah, Christ and others, each with a dispensation appropriate for a certain time and space. But Muhammad's dispensation sums up as well as supersedes all earlier ones. It is final. After it there is none."

d) As regards the fourth condition, if a partner were really needed he would have been appointed in the time of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to share the burden of his ministry. Since no co-prophet was appointed, this condition also stands fulfilled.

4) **Testimony from Quran And Hadith:**

Quran says:

"Muhammad is not the father of any man among you but he is the Messenger of Allah and the seal of the Prophets and Allah is aware of all things."

Holy Prophet observed:

"My relation to the long chain of Prophets can be understood by the parable of a palace. The palace was most beautifully built. Everything was complete therein except the place of a brick. I have filled in that place and now the castle has been completed."

At another place the Prophet said:

"I am the last in the line of Prophets and you are the last community of believers."

“The tribes of Israel were guided by Prophets. When one Prophet passed away another prophet succeeded him. But no prophet will come after me; only caliphs will succeed me.”

5) **Firm belief of companions:**

The companions of the Holy Prophet firmly believed this fact. After the demise of Prophet false prophets claimed the prophethood. But the companions unanimously waged wars with them.

6) **Consensus of Ulema:**

a) **Imam Abu Hanifa:**

A man in the time of the Imam laid claim to prophethood and said, “let me show the proofs of my prophethood.” The great Imam warned the people that if anyone asked of that man the credentials of prophethood would become an apostate, for the Prophet of God had explicitly declared that no Prophet would come after him.

b) **Imam Ghazali:**

He opines that if someone says that is possible for a person to attain the office of Prophethood after our Apostle Muhammad, we shall not hesitate to pronounce him as an infidel. Because God has sealed and closed the prophethood and the door of the prophethood shall not open for anyone till the end of the world.

7) **Importance or Significance of this belief:** The belief in the finality of Prophethood has secured Muslim society from the danger of any fundamental dissension which might result in permanent division in its ranks. Now every man who accepts Muhammad (PBUH) as a divinely appointed Guide and Leader and also is not inclined to seek instruction from any other source except the Divine message of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) is a member of the brotherhood of Islam and on this basis, can join this brotherhood at any time. If the office of Prophethood had not been sealed once and for all after Muhammad (PBUH), the people of Islam could never have forged a cohesive society; for every new prophet would have shattered the unity of the Ummah.

COMPILATION OF HADITH

When Hadrat Umar Bin Abdul Aziz of the Umayyad dynasty became Head of the Muslim commonwealth, he sent directives to Governors, officials, divines and intellectuals to collect the words of the Prophet after thorough investigation. In compliance with the Caliph's orders a considerable number of scholars and divines tried to specialize in the science of Hadith and left no stone unturned in checking the sayings of the Prophet, reported from different sources, and selecting the correct and genuine ones. Ibn Shihab Zahri of Medina was the first person who compiled a book on Hadith. He was followed by several traditionists.

Afterwards in 143 A.H. the Abbasid Caliph, Abu Ja'far al-Mansur, issued orders to the scholars and divines to compile books on Hadith, Tafsir and Fiqh. Ibn Jarih, Imam Malik, Imam Auzai, Sufyan Jhawri, Hammad bin Salamah, Imam Abu Hanifah, Ibn ul-Mubarak, Imam Abu Yusuf and several others wrote books on Haith, Fiqh or other Islamic subjects. Caliph al-Mansur who was well versed in Hadith and Fiqh built an Academy at Baghdad and opened Madrasahs in several places of the country for the teaching fo Islamic learning and lore.

The Muhaddithins (Specialists in Hadith) were very particular in distinguishing between correct and incorrect Ahadith. For this purpose they introduced a new branch of learning, called "Asma-ur-Rijal" (i.e. Names of narrators of Ahadith). In the books written on this subject more than one lakh narrators of Ahadith have been listed in which their full career is given with their qualifications, antecedents and character. Whenever a Hadith was to be checked a reference to the above books was necessary. It that Hadith conformed to the rules and regulations of the Science of Hadith, i.e. if all its narrators were found to be truthful and reliable and its contents did not conflict with the verses of the Quran, that Hadith was accepted as correct, otherwise it was rejected or placed under weak or doubtful Ahadith. In this way a large number of Ahadith were either totally rejected or declared doubtful. A small number of them which fulfilled the necessary conditions of correct Ahadith were accepted as true.

Haji- The climax of Spiritual Discipline

1. Introduction:

The House of Allah, Kaaba, was destined to be the all-time rallying point, the symbol of unity, integrity, equality, and fraternity of those who, despite all their petty and insignificant internecine differences, have committed their selves to the submission of the will and pleasure of the Almighty One.

There are three levels of this pilgrimage: The Hajj of the body (walking, standing, collecting and throwing), the Hajj of the mind (performing the rites with understanding) and the Hajj of the heart (performed in total submission to the Almighty).

2.

Meaning: Hajj literally means "intention" and also stands for "prevention", but in the terminology of the Sharia it means "the will to visit the Holy Kaba". The pilgrimage to Makkah is one of the central obligations for a Muslim adult, male and female, to be performed, as soon as one has the financial means and health permits.

"And pilgrimage to the house is a duty unto Allah for mankind, for him who can find a way there." (Quran)

3. Importance:

- a) The spiritual significance and the religious worth of Kaaba could be somewhat gauged by the fact that the Quran uses the word 'Qyam' (means of preservation and continuation) while bringing out the importance of money and goods for the sustenance of human life.

The same word is used by the Quran while highlighting the spiritual significance of the Ka'ba saying God has made the Ka'ba, the Sacred House, the source of sustenance for (the spiritual life of) mankind. Thus as a man ceases to exist materially due to his non-access to life-preserving means, likewise his soul becomes dead when his spiritual channels leading to the only reservoir of spirituality, the sole fount of Divine Blessings, the House of God, get blocked and dried up.

It is thus with the intention to rekindle the fire of love of Allah in his heart, and to recharge his passion for sacrificing everything to please his Master that a believer visits the house of his Lord.

Qyam

- b) The annual congregation provides an opportunity for the believers from all parts of the world to become acquainted with the many social and political problems that confront the various geographically separated nations. In the early days of Islam, Pilgrims used to discuss their grievances. For this big congregation the plains of Arafat provided the right place (Arafat means occasion or mutual introduction or 'Ta'aruf'). The urgent problems of the day were discussed and the head of state or his representative in his sermon (khutba) outlined the programme and plans for the next year to be followed and implemented by Muslims in their respective areas of influence.
- c) A mammoth congregation like Hajj should create fear and awe among the others.

4. **Islamic Importance:** The performance of Hajj has been declared to be one of the pillars of Islam. It is such an indispensable requirement that the Holy Prophet, in extremely stern words of rebuke, coupled with a show of total indifference and scornful unconcern for those who defy this Divine order. Holy Prophet says:

"If a person is not hampered by any diseases, real necessities or a tyrannical ruler and yet goes not perform Hajj, it makes little difference whether he dies a Jew or a Christian".

As opposed to this, one who properly performs this sacred rite has been commended so highly that nothing better can be wished for.

"Nothing but the Heaven is the reward of an approved Hajj". (Hadith)

5. Wisdom of Manasik:

- a) **Ihram:** The sacred garment which a pilgrim puts on during pilgrimage (Ihram) is not a dress. In that garment he nothing but a beggar, indifferent to everything except the Divine pleasure. He is a soldier in a uniform imbued with the spirit to sacrifice himself on a Divine Command.

Also, when pilgrims from all corner of the world putt off their ordinary dress and wears pilgrim's sacred robe, the Islamic nationhood becomes a visible reality. It also indicates the equality of all people in the eyes of God.

The 'ihram' is a symbol of purity. When a pilgrim wears his white apparel, he or she enters into a state of purity that prohibits quarrelling, committing violence and having conjugal relations.

- b) **The Slogan (Talbih):** The slogan, "I stand up (for your service), O Allah! I standup" is not any empty slogan and a mere performance of ritual rather it is a declaration that a humble servant is at the command of his Master and submits to Him.

c) **Tawaf:** Tawaf is the expression of an ardent passion for sacrificing oneself for the pleasure of Allah. He is imbued with the legendary fervor which the moth possesses for the candle.

d) **Rammi:** Throwing of stones on the three pillars at Mina is an expression of their firm resolve that they will ward off evil in their life in the same manner and that those who cast a malicious look on the Divine Religion will be destroyed by them.

e) **Sacrifice of Animal:** The sacrifice of an animal on Eid day in the path of Allah is akin to sacrificing oneself. It is a quiet admission that our lives are devoted to Allah. Whenever they will be asked by Him to give their lives, they will do it immediately

6. **Comprehensive Nature of Hajj:**

a) **Hajj is Prayer:** The essence of prayer is the remembrance of Allah. During the Hajj the words "Allah we are present" are constantly recited by the pilgrims, side by side he sees before him the monuments towards which he turns in prayer. This enhances his sense of worship. Also the equality demonstrated at the time of prayer is also established during Hajj. Dr. Lener writes in "Religious Systems of the World"

"The demonstration of equality furnished on the occasion of Hajj is so complete that it is well-nigh impossible to distinguish a servant from a master. The whole of humanity assumes one aspect and one attitude and thus the noblest sight of equality and brotherhood is witnessed in Hajj. There is in this city a force, transcends the littleness and divisions of mankind".

b) **Hajj is Zakat:** Because every pilgrim spends money for a journey in the path of Allah. Moreover he is commanded by Allah to distribute the meat of slaughtered animals among the poor. The meaning of Zakat is essentially this, to spend our money at the command of Allah.

c) **Hajj is Fasting:** For instance, sexual contact is forbidden during the course of the fast at day-time. In the pilgrimage it is forbidden at night as well. Also as abusing and fighting is prohibited during a fast, the same is the case with pilgrimage. As Quran says: "Whosoever determines the performance of pilgrimage, therein, there shall be no amorous speech, no abusing and no disputing."

d) **Hajj is Jihad:** Jihad means to strive in the path of Allah. All the physical and monetary hardships which a pilgrim takes for this journey tantamount to Jihad.

Also it is Jihad for women. Once Hazrat Ayesha (RZ) asked the Prophet: "Is there any Jihad for women?" "Yes", replied he, "there is for them Jihad wherein there is no fighting-Hajj and Umrah."

e) **Hajj imparts faith in the Tauheed:** When a vast multitude of pilgrims coming from different countries makes the circuits with a unanimous appearance and spirit, it is a reaffirmation of the fact that as Allah is One and His religion is one, similarly all His true believers are one. Their apparent differences are but superficial.

f) **Hajj portrays the scene of Hereafter:** The few hours of stay (wuqaf) at Arafat is the most important in a pilgrim's life as this gathering is the core of Hajj congregation. It provides a foretaste of the Day of Judgement. It reminds the pilgrims that as hordes of people gather at Kaaba to perform Hajj, similarly all people will gather at Arafat on the Day of Judgment to settle their accounts.

7. **Conclusion:**

As the Nato forces conduct annual exercises to keep themselves prepared for any battle, similarly Hajj is an annual exercise for Muslims to renew their spirit of sacrifice in the way of Allah. This is the only model upon which a move towards a supra-natural synthesis of mankind can be estimated.

Process of Hajj:

Haj's first rite is the intention and then putting on of the ihram. For men, 'ihram' are two pieces of white seamless cloth one covers the body from waist to ankle and the other is thrown over the shoulder. Men's heads remain uncovered. Women generally wear a simple white dress and a head-cover, but not a veil. ①

The 'ihram' is a symbol of purity. It also indicates the equality of all people in the eyes of God. When a pilgrim wears his white apparel, he or she enters into a state of purity that prohibits quarrelling, committing violence and having conjugal relations.

With the wearing of the 'ihram' the pilgrims start reciting the primary invocation of Haj, known as the talbiyah: "Here I am, O god, at Thy Command! Here I am at Thy Command! Thou art without associate; Here I am at Thy Command! Thine are praise and grade and dominion! Thou art without associate." ②

On the first day of the Haj, the pilgrims leave Makkah for Mina, a small uninhabited village, east of the city. On the next day, the pilgrims leave Mina for the plain of 'Arafat for 'wuquf', the staying", which is one of the main rites of the Haj. ③

As they stay there till dusk, the pilgrims are reminded of the day of Judgment. The whole congregation offers two prayers, the Zohar, and the Asar and the Imam says khutba dealing with matters of the Muslim.

After Khutba, the pilgrims go to the Mount of Mercy, where Prophet Mohammad (Pbuh) had delivered his "Farewell Sermon", covering religious economic, social and political aspects of life for the Muslims. ④

The stay at Arafat is an emotionally charged experience during which the pilgrims are immersed in worship and supplication; tears rolling on their cheeks, as they ask God to forgive them. On this sacred place, they reach the culmination of their religious lives as they feel the presence and closeness of a merciful Allah.

Just after sunset, the pilgrims proceed to 'Muzdalifah', an open plain about half way between Arafat and Mina. There they pass the night in open, praying. Before daybreak on the third day, the pilgrims move en masse from Muzdalifah to Mina. There they cast at white pillars, symbolizing the 'Satan', pebbles they have previously collected. ⑤

According to some traditions, this practice is associated with Prophet Abraham. As pilgrims throw seven pebbles at each of these three pillars, they remember the story of Satan's attempt to persuade Abraham to disregard God's command to sacrifice his son.

Following the throwing of the pebbles, most pilgrims sacrifice a goat, sheep or camel. This rite is associated with Ibrahim's readiness to sacrifice his son in accordance with God's wish.

It symbolizes the Muslims' willingness to part with what is precious to them, and reminds them of the spirit of Islam, in which submission to God's will plays a leading role. This act also asks the pilgrims to share worldly goods with those who are less fortunate. It also serves as an offer of thanksgiving to God.

The pilgrims then remove their 'ihram' and put on usual clothes. Men either shave their heads or clip their hair, and women cut off a symbolic lock. This is done as a symbol of humility. ⑥

On this day Muslims around the world celebrate the completion of Haj with the pilgrims and join them by performing identical, individual sacrifices in a worldwide celebration of the Festival of Sacrifice.

In Mina, the pilgrims visit Makkah to perform another essential rite of Haj: the 'tawaf', the seven-time circling of the Ka'bah, with a prayer recited during each circuit. This demonstrates that all human activity must have God at its centre. It also symbolizes the unity of God. ⑦

While making this move the pilgrims may kiss or touch the oval Black Stone, mounted in a silver frame. It has a special place in the hearts of the Muslims as, according to some traditions, the stone came from heaven. Some say that it is the sole remnant of the original structure built by Ibrahim. But the single most important reason for kissing the stone is that Prophet Mohammad did so.

After completing the 'tawaf', the pilgrims pray, preferably at the site where Ibrahim stood while he built the Ka'bah. Then they drink "Aab-i-Zamzam." Another, and sometimes the final rite is the 'sa'y', or "the running." This is a re-enactment of a memorable episode in the life of Hazrat Hajira. She ran back and forth seven times between two rocky hillocks, 'al-Safa' and 'al-Marwah', until she found the sacred water, known gushing out miraculously under Ismael's tiny feet. ⑧

The pilgrims then return to Mina, where they stay for two days. There they throw their remaining pebbles at each of the pillars (Satan), each day. ⑨

Life Hereafter

1. Introduction:

Everyone knows that a cultivator prepares soil of the field, sows the seeds therein, irrigates it and waits patiently for the growth till the crop is ready for harvesting. If he sowed the seeds of wheat, he will yield the crop of wheat and if he tilled the rice, he will reap rice accordingly. "As you so, so shall you reap."

The Prophet has linked this world to a field and our activities **therein** to preparing the soil and sowing the seeds therein, whose harvest will be reaped not in this world but in the next world, called the Hereafter.

2. Concept of Hereafter in old races:

Belief in resurrection and accountability predates the Abrahamic faiths. The ancient Egyptians buried their dead monarchs in huge pyramids with all their precious jewels and other belongings to be used by them after resurrection. The ancient Greeks believed in an underworld called Hades, the abode of the dead as well as a dark purgatory. The Zoroastrians of Persia who were of Aryan stock held beliefs of reward and retribution. The South Asians believed in the transmigration of soul- an unending chain of birth and rebirths till attainment of Salvation or Mukti.

3. Islamic Viewpoint:

- a) The life of this world and all that is in it will come to an end on an appointed day.
"Everything, except Allah, will perish." (Quran)
- b) The humans who have lived in the world since its inception will then be restored to life and will be presented before God, who will run the Great Court on that day.
"You will have to die as you sleep and you will have to get up as you wake."
- c) The entire record of man and woman of all their doings and misdoings will be presented before God for final judgement.
"On the day of Resurrection we will bring forth a book which shall be proffered to him wide open. Read your Record. This day there need be none but yourself to make out an account against you."
- d) God shall finally adjudge the reward of every person. He shall weigh every one's good and bad deeds. One who excels in goodness will be rewarded a goodly reward and one whose evils and wrongs over weigh his deeds, will be severely punished.
"As for one whose measure of good deeds is heavy, he shall have a pleasant life and as for one whose measure is light, his abode shall be hell."

4. Importance:

a) It is a dividing line between Belief and Unbelief:

The Life Hereafter is a basic truth without active belief in which it is impossible for anyone to be a Muslim. A man who does not believe in the day of judgement would not consider belief in God and a life in accordance with His code of any consequence. To him neither obedience to God is of any advantage, nor disobedience to Him of any harm. How then, would it be possible for him to scrupulously follow the injunctions of God, His Prophet, and His Book? Therefore, belief in the life after death is the greatest deciding factor in the life of a man because its acceptance or rejection determines the very course of one's life and behaviour.

"... and who believe in the Revelation sent to you (O Muhammad) and sent before you, and on the life Hereafter they have firm conviction. These are on the right path guided by their Lord, and these are the successful."

For those who do not believe in the Life Hereafter, the Quran emphasizes the wrongfulness of their attitude and its consequences.

"Nay, it is those who believe not in the Hereafter, they are in a torment and error far-reaching."

b) It is the Requirement of Human Nature, Because:

- i. The love of life and the yearning for self-preservation, which are ingrained in human nature, refuse to admit the cessation of life in death.
- ii. Denial of life after death engenders nihilistic attitude, and nihilism is wedded to despair.
- iii. Confining the reward or punishment of actions to immediate execution in this life amounts to negation of the world being a moral order, because the individual is deprived of the chance of exhausting the possibilities of self-refomation.
- iv. No human action- good or evil- can mature as regards its consequences until the present human world endures, because every action gives rise to an endless chain reactions. This renders the fulfillment of the principle of just and adequate reward and punishment in the present life is impossible.

Hence final and full reward and punishment should be conceived to be deferred to the Life Hereafter.

c) **Importance in Human life:**

Belief in the continuity of life in the next world is a revolutionary concept in the absence of which he is a mere plaything in the hands of his whims and caprices which teach him nothing but to drive the maximum possible amount of pleasure during this short sojourn upon the earth. Mutual rivalries, savage battles and conflicts over the possession of material gains follow, as there is no Higher Power to control and restrain one's desires.

On the contrary, belief in the Hereafter gives a man a firm sense of security, banishing from his heart the fear of extinction. This means that his efforts shall not be wasted but shall be crowned with fullest reward in the life to come, even if he is unable to achieve anything in this world.

5. **Its Impact or Effects:**

a) A person who believes in resurrection and hereafter is inculcated with a **sense of responsibility and accountability**; he leaves the path of vice and becomes God-fearing. Because he knows all his actions- good or bad, are written in his performance book which will be presented to God on the day of the judgement. His actions will be judged accordingly and those who have performed good actions will be rewarded and those who indulged in bad actions will be punished.

b) A believer in the final judgement will **not confine the reward of his virtues to this world**. Even if he receives no reward in this world, he will neither despair of virtues nor become complacent over his misdeeds. This lifts up the human vision beyond earthly existence and crushes the attitude of earth-rootedness which is the mother of all moral ills.

c) **It bestows on human values absoluteness, as opposed to expediency** and renders the moral struggle worth-while, meaningful and genuinely consequential.

d) **It provides the enthusiasm for moral struggle**, in the face of all obstructions and frustrating situations. It enables us to bear trials and tribulations with patience and forbearance so that man emerges from such trials burnished like gold emerging from the furnace.

e) **It establishes the rational ground for the highest sacrifice** in the service of all that is good- including the sacrifice of life, which for a genuine believer in God and the Resurrection is an aspiration of life.

6. **Conclusion:**

Islam: A Complete Code Of Life

Islam is not a mere religion instead it is a complete code of human life. Islam neither endorses asceticism nor it covers the problems of individual life alone. No problem is outside its scope. It is a religion which dominates man's entire life. In short, it is a code which governs every aspect of human life- be it religious, intellectual, moral, practical or any other. It can be compared to the air which encompasses the planet earth.

1. **Spiritual System:** The nucleus of the Islamic system is the part which has a direct bearing on the inner life of a man. It is commonly known as the spiritual system and strives to emancipate his spirit from the servitude of "self", purges it of the lust of worldly life and imbues it with the passion of His Love, obedience and pleasure. He acts upon the commands of his real Master, fears His displeasure, actively pursues His pleasure and he is always ready to sacrifice his life and wealth on His slightest biddings. This level of Spiritualism, which represents the loftiest and the best standard, is known as "Ihsan" in Islamic terminology. This level of purity and Divine pleasure can be attained by adopting the methods prescribed by Islam called the pillars of Islam.

2. **Moral System:** The initial and the most popular means of evaluating the piety or otherwise of one's spirit is by appraising one's moral behaviour. Outward conduct is but an index of one's inward life. This is why, its importance has also been emphasized by religion. So much so that in one respect it is the essence of religion. Prophet once remarked: "I have been sent for the perfection of civilized behaviour."

Islam has its own standard and permanent system regarding the morals. In this system truth and honesty shall always remain the highest virtues; justice will be done even if it harms one's own interest; violation of promise is not permissible even with one's enemy.

3. **Social System:** Beyond the limited sphere of home lies a vast collective social life which is known as society. Islam has laid down some fundamental principles in respect of this sphere. According to Islam the multitude of people, who collectively form a society, are off-springs of one parentage. Quran says:

"Who created you from a single soul."

As such they are all equal by birth. There is neither a difference of high and low, nor of pure and impure. People of every colour, clime and race are equal in status and rights. There cannot be any distinction among them because of any peculiarity of colour, race, country or language. Only Islam is the object of distinction.

Thus on the basis of faith and religion emerges tow societies. Naturally Islam has separate injunctions for each of them. As far as the non-Muslim society is concerned, it is the essence of Islamic teachings that its members should be treated in usual manner with full freedom of their religion. In respect of Islamic society, Islam has given express injunctions. These injunctions form "the Social System of Islam." The main principles of which are summarized below:

a) The mutual relations of Muslims are based on brotherhood, sympathy, co-operation and sacrifice. "The believers are naught else that brothers."

b) Virtues such as welfare of people and fear of Allah be encouraged in the society.

"Help you one another unto righteousness and pioussness."

c) Vice should not be allowed to flourish in the society.

"Whosoever amongst you sees evil; he should check it with the help of his hand."

d) Social justice should be the hallmark of the society irrespective of social distinctions of class, creed, or colour.

4. **Economic System:** The economic policy of Islam has been explained in the Quran, in most unequivocal terms:

"so that this (wealth) may not circulate among the rich form among you."

It is on the basis of this fundamental principle that Islam has constructed it economic system. If it tolerates the minority of the rich, it imposes on them heavier obligations: they have to pay taxes in the interest of poor, and they are prevented from practicing immoral means of exploitation, hoarding and accumulation of wealth.

5. **Political System:** The political system of Islam has been based on three principles viz Tawheed, Risalat and Khilafat. The state in Islam is not intended for political administration only nor for the fulfillment through it of the collective will of any particular set of people; rather Islam places a high ideal before the state for the achievement of which it must use all means at its disposal. And this purpose is that the qualities of purity, beauty, goodness, virtue, success and prosperity should be engendered and evolved and that all kinds of exploitation, injustice and disorder which is ruinous for the world and detrimental to the life of His creatures and suppressed and prevented.

Jihad

1) **Introduction:** Islam is “the religion of peace”, teaches to live in peace and preserve peace. It condemns aggression and political, economic and racial domination. For the defence of peace, it advocates “JEHAD”; first against our own base nature and then against those who disturb peace and violate the sanctity of Muslim Ummah.

Mistaken View: But there is a great deal of misunderstanding in the west about the concept of Jihad in Islam. They believe that it is synonymous with “WAR” undertaken for spreading Islam. A number of eminent Western scholars like A.J. Wensink, in his book, “A Handbook of Early Muhammadan Traditions”, uses the word ‘Jihad’ for war. Similarly another writer, Klein, in his book “The Religion of Islam”, comments in the same strain i.e fighting against unbelievers. Let us see the real meaning of “JEHAD”.

Real Meaning of Jihad: The word “JEHAD” is derived from “JAHD” or “JUHD” which signifies exertion, striving and ceaseless effort to one’s utmost capacity for the attainment of an ideal. Therefore, to strive in the way of Allah signifies that one should do everything he is capable of for the pleasure of Allah; for obedience of the Divine injunctions and for bearing a witness to the Truth. Its object is not to spread Islam, but to remove all those tyrannical forces which are inimical to Islam and does not give all a fair deal.

Our idea about JEHAD will become crystal clear when we will cast a glance over its categories.

2) Categories of Jihad:

***Esoteric Jihad**----- warring with one’s own base nature (Jihad bin Nafs)

***Exoteric Jihad**----- external manifestation of Jihad i.e

- a) warring with the help of Knowledge
- b) warring with the help of wealth, and
- c) warring with sword.

i) JIHAD BIN NAFS

The weight of deeds rests on intentions. These intentions cannot be salutary unless intentions are pure and unless one has control over his passion. From this we derive the morale that striving with oneself is the deed having the highest stature. As Aristotle has said:

“I think braver he who overcomes his desires, than him who overcomes his enemies”.

Without this Jihad no other Jihad can be brought to completion. This is why Allah has given precedence to His virtuous creatures-Sadiqeen, over the Martyrs. Because, even martyrdom cannot be attained without sincerity of will and Jihad Bin Nafs. Shaikhul Islam Ibn Taimiya remarked:

“Battle with enemy forces takes place occasionally, but a faithful spends his entire life- every morning of his life and every evening of his life engaged in Jihad”.

Rumi once said:

نفس حق اول بجان انداختن
باز او را در جبهان انداختن

“The stamp of truth or God should first sublimate the self and then it should be propagated throughout the world”.

ii) JIHAD WITH KNOWLEDGE

This form of Jihad enjoins that the doubts or objections expressed about Islam by the non-Muslim are so completely answered that it leaves no ambiguity about any aspect of Islam. Quran says:

“So obey not the disbelievers but strive against them herewith (the Quran) with a great endeavour.”

The Prophet has regarded it Jihad of the tongue. “ Wage war against the infidels with yours lives and your tongue.”

Hussain Nassr explained this type of Jihad in these words:

“..... the challenges of the modern world to Islam requires a rigorous application of intellectual discernment based ultimately on the SHAHADAH, the fist letter of which, when written in Arabic, is in fact a form of a sword. This sword must be used to break the false idols of the new age of ignorance; idols which so many Muslims accept without even troubling to question their nature.”

iii) JIHAD WITH WEALTH

People who are physically disable can participate in this Jihad for earning the Will of Allah and contributing to the glory of Islam by giving their wealth or riches. This Jihad is also vital for meeting the mobilization expenses of war. Quran says:

“And fight in the way of Allah with your possessions.”

Holy Prophet said:

“Anyone who provides material for war to any Mujahid acts as though he himself participated in it and anyone who looks after the family of a Mujahid acts as if he himself took part in Jihad.”

iv) **JIHAD WITH SWORD**

Jihad with physical force is enjoined against those who obstruct the way of Islam and its name is “Qital”.

“And fight against them until persecution is no more and religion is for Allah.”

“If Allah had not repelled some men by means of others, this world would have filled with mischief.”

This means that if the sword is not used for the religion and the mischief is not uprooted, the religion will perish. Thus the use of force is inevitable for the perpetuation of religion. Therefore, all the wars waged by the Prophet were undertaken owing to this reason. Evidence to this fact is produced by Sir T.W. Arnold. He concludes his book, “The Preaching of Islam” in the words “..... the aim of Islamic wars was to keep the word of God Supreme on earth by ensuring the sovereignty of those who believe in the Oneness of God, to allow people the freedom to promote the welfare and to establish justice and peace in all societies.”

3) **Conclusion:**

Prayer

1. Meaning

Salat means worship, to invoke God in prayer, to invite the blessings of God. In lexicography, the word 'Salat' is used for attending to something or paying attention to someone. But in Quranic terminology it means the prayer ritual five times a day.

2. Prayer in other religions:

Prayer has always remained an essential part of the revealed religions of the world. All the Messengers of God, including the messengers from amongst Bani Israel, had strictly enjoined this on their followers. The Israelites were commanded to establish prayer in the Old Testament in these words.

"Seek you the Lord while He may be found, call you upon Him while He is near."

And a similar commandment is found in the New Testament:

"Watch you therefore and pray always, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all those things that shall come to pass."

3. Importance:

a) A first manifestation of Faith:

Prayer is the first manifestation of faith. If a person has faith that Allah alone is his Master and he is nothing but a humble slave of His, his belief manifests in prayer. That is why at numerous places in the Quran prayer is mentioned immediately after faith. For instance:

"Lo! Those who believe and do good deeds and establish prayer."

It signifies that if the seed of faith is laid in one's heart, the first shoot that sprouts will be prayer.

b) It is the Guardian of Faith:

Prayer is the guardian of faith. If prayer is established, obedience of other injunctions will follow. On the contrary, if prayer is neglected, other injunctions will also go by *fault*. Prayer has the same importance in faith as heart has in the human body. If heart has the vigour, the vitality, the flow of blood continues to other parts of the body and keeps them alive and active. But if heart loses life and beat, other parts become lifeless and inactive. That is why it is called the pillar of faith. In a letter addressed to his officers, Caliph Umar once wrote:

"To me the most important of your problems is that of prayer. On who establishes prayer and does full justice to it, protects the whole faith and one who loses it is destined to lose still more."

c) Quranic Importance:

Quran has emphasized its importance time and again. Laziness and sluggishness in its performance is a sign of hypocrisy and abstention from it is a sign of disbelief. The following verse of Quran compares such people with those who ascribe partners to God.

"Establish regular prayer and be not among those who join partners with God."

On the Day of Judgment the first question asked will be about the prayer. If one's prayer is found correct then one's all other deeds will be considered likewise. But if one's prayer is found faulty, then one's all other deeds will be considered faulty.

It is stated in the Quran that on the Day of Judgment the Angels would ask from the inhabitants of Hell:

"What has brought you to this hell?"

Their reply would be:

"We were not among those who prayed."

d) It is the very purpose of creation:

Quran says that the purpose of human creation is nothing but to worship Allah.

"I have not created the jinn and men for any other purpose except that they worship me."

"...it is Allah whose Tasbih is the function of all in the heavens and on the earth, and the birds with wings outspread. Surely each one knows its own mode of prayer and its own mode of Tasbih. And Allah is aware of what they do."

4) Individual Benefits:

a) Strengthens Faith:

The regular observance of prayer helps in strengthening one's faith in God. Now see how this is achieved. You perform ablution and perform it in the way prescribed by the Prophet. You say your prayers according to the instructions of the Prophet. Why do you do so? What makes you leave your important business and other occupations and rush towards the mosque for prayer? Because your heart is

filled with the fear of God and you know that you have to appear before Him on the Day of Judgment.

b) Punctuality And Sense of Duty:

Salat teaches strict punctuality. A believer has to offer his Salat five times daily at appointed times. This punctuality in Salat teaches him to do things at proper times. Wherever and in whatever position he may be, he is always punctual and hardworking. Prayer is the duty of man towards God. The regular observance of this duty will make him aware of the duties of his fellowmen. He will try to be good and helpful towards them.

c) Character Building or Refinement:

Prayer establishes one's contact with the Unseen. This contact has a purifying effect on the heart; it moralizes and spiritualizes our emotions and instincts. Quran Says:

"Prayer keeps (one) away from indecency and evil, and certainly the remembrance of Allah is the greatest (force)."

The prayer helps a man to remove his defects, internal as well as external. Externally he becomes very refined and clean, and internally, pious and dutiful.

Once Holy Prophet said to his companions:

"If any of you has a stream at his door in which he washes himself five times a day, what do you think about his cleanliness? Would it leave any impurity on him?"
"This is the example of the five prayers with which God washes away all the evils of a man."

d) Patience and Perseverance:

Prayer develops in man such qualities as patience, endurance, contentment and perseverance which are needed in the service of justice and goodness and above all are a source of strength in the face of hardships and difficulties. The Holy Messenger is told to be patient in the face of hardship and to establish Salat to strengthen his power of resistance against evil forces.

"And seek assistance through patience and prayer."

"Behold, souls find solace in the remembrance of Allah."

5) Collective or Social Benefits:

a) It provides a social platform:

After the congregational prayers, the gathering begins to serve all other purposes of life. Problems of general welfare are discussed. The leader addresses them on all vital topics. Political and economic questions are brought forward for discussion. Any person can stand up and present even his individual need before the community. A nation having this conception of prayer needs no other clubs or assemblies.

b) It heightens Religious Emotions:

When a number of persons pray together in unison, the religious emotion is heightened. When the Muslims assemble in the mosque, they meet other people who believe in One God, follow one Messenger and One Book and have common objectives. They feel as brothers and companions, whose gains and losses are common.

c) A discipline in Democracy: (Egalitarian Society)

In Salat the equality before God is reflected in equality among men. The rich and the poor, the high and the low, the powerful and the weak, must stand together, shoulder to shoulder.

ایک ہی صف میں کھڑے ہو کر مسجود و ایاز
ناگونی بزار پانہ بذا نواز

Thus Islamic congregational prayer is a great leveler. In the mosque the Muslims become a classless society.

d) Establishes the Principle of Leadership:

In Islam, there is no hereditary or ordained priesthood. The best man in the congregation is asked to lead the prayers; he must be considered from the point of view of knowledge and piety. They are not to be chosen because of their wealth or social position or because of belonging to a particular profession or caste but solely on the basis of knowledge and character. Holy Prophet said:

"Obey you leader even if he is a Negro."

e) World Wide Brotherhood:

In Muslim Prayer there is another element of unification. Every Muslim all over the world turns his face towards on centre, the Kaaba. This strengthens the sense of unity in a world wide brotherhood.

+ getting up at Fajr
by disrupting one's
deep sleep. In winter
one makes ablution
with cold water.
+ One leaves his
work stops his material
earnings.

Brief History of Compilation of the Qur'an

During the life of the Prophet (saas) (570-632 CE)

1. The Prophet (saas) used to recite the Qur'an before angel Jibreel (Gabriel) once every Ramadan, but he recited it twice (in the same order we have today) in the last Ramadan before his death. Jibreel also taught the Prophet (saas) the seven modes of recitation. Each verse received was recited by the Prophet, and its location relative to other verses and surahs was identified by him.
2. The verses were written by scribes, selected by the Prophet, on any suitable object - the leaves of trees, pieces of wood, parchment of leather, flat stones, and shoulder blades. Scribes included Ali, Mu'awiyah, Ubey Ibn Ka'ab, Zayed Ibn Thabit.
3. Several hundred companions memorized the Qur'an by heart.

During the caliphate of Abu Bakr (632-634 CE)

1. Umar Ibn Al-Khattab urged Abu Bakr to preserve and compile the Qur'an. This was prompted after the battle of Yamamah, where heavy casualties were suffered among the reciters who memorized the Qur'an.
2. Abu Bakr entrusted Zayed Ibn Thabit with the task of collecting the Qur'an. Zayed had been present during the last recitation of the Qur'an by the Prophet to Angel Jibreel (Gabriel).
3. Zayed, with the help of the companions who memorized and wrote verses of the Qur'an, accomplished the task and handed Abu Bakr the first authenticated copy of the Qur'an. The copy was kept in the residence of Hafsa, daughter of Umar and wife of the Prophet.

During the caliphate of Uthman (644-656 CE)

1. When Syrian and Iraqi armies of the Muslims were fighting jointly against the Armenians and the Azerbaijanian, the people belonging to Syria and Iraq recited Quran daily but there was some difference in their Qira'at (Diction). To this, Uthman ordered Zayed Ibn Thabit, Abdullah Ibn Al Zubayr, Saeed Ibn Al-Aas, and Abdur-Rahman Ibn Harith to make perfect copies of the authenticated copy kept with Hafsa. This was due to the rapid expansion of the Islamic state and concern about differences in recitation.
2. Copies were sent to various places in the Muslim world. The original copy was returned to Hafsa, and a copy was kept in Madinah.

Three stages of dotting and diacritization

1. Dots were put as syntactical marks by Abu Al-Aswad Al Doaly, during the time of Mu'awiya Ibn Abi Sufian (661-680 CE).
2. The letters were marked with different dotting by Nasr Ibn Asem and Hayy ibn Ya'amor, during the time of Abd Al-Malek Ibn Marawan (685-705 CE).
3. A complete system of diacritical marks (damma, fataha, kasra) was invented by Al Khaleel Ibn Ahmad Al Faraheedy (d. 786 CE).

SOME SALIENT FEATURES OF QURAN

Introduction: Quran embodies the Word of God. It was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. The Quran is unique in almost every aspect, in its Divine Origin, its style and methodology, its chronological descent, its textual arrangement, and its approach to the problems of man and society. It constitutes a divinely-opened window on Reality.

1. Quran: a Masterpiece of Literature:

The Quran is a masterpiece of literature from every angle of vision. It is unique in letter and spirit. Both its words and ideas conveyed ~~by them~~ are unrivalled and inimitable. Allah challenged the disbelievers of Mecca to produce even a single chapter (Surah) like that of the Quran, but they miserably failed. The Quran says:

"Say: Verily, though the mankind and the Jinn should assemble to produce like this Quran, they could not produce the like thereof though they were helpers one of another."

Since then, more than fourteen hundred years have passed, and nobody has been able to meet the challenge, and nobody will, because the Qur'an is the only existing book containing the word of Allah which no man can match or imitate. The most eloquent people in the Arabic language spent years going over and searching the Qur'an, trying to find any weak or inadequate word or sentence, but they could not. They even went further, trying to find a way to substitute a word or a sentence in the Qur'an, hoping to convey a similar meaning as the original one, but they failed to do so.

The language of the Quran is rhythmical and rhetorical. Commenting on the style of the Quran, Sale says: "The style of the Quran, is generally beautiful and fluent, in many places, especially where the majesty and attributes of God are described, sublime and magnificent." According to Nicolas, the Quran is so pure in language and so beautiful in style that no human genius can neither imitate nor produce one like it. In the words of Palmer, "That the best of the Arab writers had never succeeded in producing anything equal in merit to the Quran itself is not surprising."

2. Universality of Quran:

The Quran is a universal and eternal book. It is intended for entire humanity and for all times to come. The present day set of ideals and values which are considered worthy of a civilized man to adopt and accept were revealed for the first time by Islam. Even after fourteen hundred years what the Quran proclaims to the world is even today the accepted gospel.

3. Quran: Liberal in its approach:

The teachings of the Quran are quite liberal because it commands all believers to believe in all Prophets of God without any discrimination and also in all revealed Books. Quran says:

"O you who believe! Believe in Allah and His Messenger and the Scripture which has revealed to His Messenger and the Scriptures which He revealed aforetime."

4. Quran is truth:

The Quran is the embodiment of Truth. Allah says:

"These are verses of the Scripture. That which is revealed to you from your Lord is the Truth, but most of mankind believe not."

Modern scientists have been amazed by the accuracy of scientific information presented in the Quran. Some people wrote books about this phenomenon which attracted the attention of many people in the west - both Muslims and Non- Muslims.

Dr. Caethe More says:

"The 1300 years old Quran contains passages so accurate about embryonic development that Muslims can reasonably believe them as the revelations from God."

5. Complete Code of Life:

The subject matter of Quran is man- his beliefs, attitudes and motives, his personality and character, his individual and social life. Quran aims to transform the life of this world with all its dimensions into a life of the 'worship of God' by channelizing it into a 'system of obedience to God'. It proposes to produce a new man and a new society. Therefore, Quran provides guidance in all walks of life- individual and social, material and moral, economic and political, legal and cultural, national and international. The Quran enjoins man 'to enter the fold of Islam without any reservation and to follow God in all fields of life.' It does not endorse the dualistic philosophy of "Give unto God what is God's and unto Caesar what is Caesar's", because everything belongs to God and nothing- absolutely nothing- belongs to Caesar- in fact, to any creature. Prophet said:

"I am leaving behind the book of Allah and the Sunnat. Act on them as these two would save you from going astray."

1400 years
passed

6. Quran is light:

The Quran is Light in the sense that it brings man out of darkness into light, and makes him lead noble life. Quran says:

“So believe in Allah and His Messenger and the Light (the Quran) We have revealed. And Allah is aware of what you do.”

7. A Panacea for all ills:

The Quran is a panacea for all ills, as it removes the miseries of mankind and purges them of evil habits. Quran says:

“For the believers, it is guidance and a healing.”

8. Originality Preserved:

Of all the revealed books the Quran is the only Book which has remained genuine and pure. It is exactly the same original text today as it was when it was revealed to Prophet about fourteen hundred years ago, and it shall remain exactly the same in future as long as the world lasts. Quran say:

“Lo! Verily, We created the Quran and Lo! We are really its guardians.”

F.F. Arbuthnot remarked:

“....complete text of the Koran....has remained the same, without any change or alteration by enthusiast, translators or interpolators, up to the present time. It is to be regretted that the same cannot be said of all the books of the Old and New Testaments.”

Conclusion: Hazrat Ali said:

“God has made Quran a drink to quench the thirst of the learned, a spring for the hearts of jurists, a guide for pious, a proof for those who talk about, an evidence for its adversaries and a convincing proof for those who pass Judgment.”

Sources of Shariah

1. **Meaning of Shairah:** Shariah, in simple words, is a set of rules governing human conduct. Islamic Shariah is the body of rules of conduct, revealed by God to His Prophet (peace be upon him) whereby the people are directed to lead their lives.

Ghazali contends that the very objective of the Shariah is to promote the welfare of the people which lies in safeguarding their faith, their lives, their intellect, their posterity and their property.

2. **Meaning of Fiqh:** Fiqh literally means understanding or knowledge. According to Imam Abu Hanifa it is the knowledge of "what is for a man's self and what is against a man's self". Shafi jurists hold Fiqh to be the knowledge of the laws of Shariat, relating to men's acts and derived from specific sources, that is, sources other than revelation. The Maliki concept of Fiqh is that it is the science of the commands of the Shariat in particular matters deduced by the application of a process of reasoning.

3. **Sources of Islamic Law:**

QURAN AS A SOURCE OF ISLAMIC LAW

1. **Introduction:** The Qur'an is the original, primary, basic and most fundamental source of the Islamic Shari'ah. It is the last book of revelations for the entire humanity. Hence, its teachings shall ever remain the fountain source of all guidance for all times, ages and people. The principles and guidelines of the Qur'an, its biddings and commandments are firm and eternal, though their interpretations shall continue to be made within the four corners of the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his revered Companions, Sahabah.

Quranic Law is the only law

2. **Salient Features:**

a. **Sovereignty belongs to Allah Alone:**

In the Islamic system, the supreme authority and sovereignty actually rests with Allah alone. No individual, clan, community or even the whole mankind has an iota of share in it.

"Authority rests with Allah alone."

"Do you not see that to Allah belongs the kingdom of the heavens and of earth."

b. **God's given Law is the only Law:**

Allah alone is the real Legislator. The constitution given by Him is the ultimate constitution of man's life. No individual or institution has the power to make one for himself or others.

"The giving of orders is for Allah alone."

"whoso judges not by what Allah has revealed such are the disbelievers."

God is the creator
Human nature only He knows
His way is right
and what is wrong
for him

c. **Quran is the Constitution of Islam:**

The Quran contains the injunctions of Allah and these have been preserved for all times to come. Therefore, Quran is the constitution of Islam. Only the laws based on Quranic principles can be termed as Islamic. Any law which does not accord with the Quran is to be rejected as un-Islamic.

"It is not for the faithful, man or woman, to decide by themselves a matter that has been decided by Allah and His messenger, and whosoever commits an affront to Allah and His messenger is certainly on the wrong path".

Quranic verses may be divided into those which were revealed in Mecca comprising about 19/30th part and those revealed in Madina after the Hijrat of the Prophet to that city. The first part deals generally with the moral aspect of life and is addressed to mankind without any discrimination. The rest concerns with legal principles and is addressed to those who are prepared to respect and observe them i.e those who believe. The Quranic principles cover the whole range of the different grades of the development of man, and are thus wonderfully adapted to the requirements of different peoples.

d. **Universality of Quran:**

Quran contemplates a legal system which can bring peace to the world and would provide adequate facilities for the development of human personality. As it professes to solve the problems of men in every age, it only enunciates the general principles which are permanent in their nature. Those principles were specifically applied by Quran to cases which actually arose, thus showing how human problems should be dealt within the light of those principles.

d) Quranic Principles are authentic because these have been preserved by God Himself for all times to come.

e. Scope of Quran:

In Quran are found guiding rules for the lay man as well as for the philosopher, and for communities in the lowest grade of civilizations as well as for the highly civilized nations of the world. Practicability is the keynote of its precepts, and thus the same universality which marks its principles of faith is to be met within its practical ordinances suiting as they do, the requirements of all ages and nations.

4. Conclusion:

Hazrat Ali said:

“God has made Quran a drink to quench the thirst of the learned, a spring for the hearts of jurists, a guide for pious, a proof for those who talk about, an evidence for its adversaries and a convincing proof for those who pass Judgment.”

PROPHET'S SUNNAH AS A SOURCE OF ISLAMIC LAW

1. **Definition:** Holy Prophet's Sunnah stands for the dynamic manifestations of the ethico-religious dimensions of his personality. Or: Looking at it in the perspective of the Quran we may define it by saying that it is the realization by him of the Quranic value-system in the different dimensions of his personality. The sunna of the Prophet generally means "tradition" and includes the following three categories: sayings of the Prophet; his deeds; and his silent or tacit approval of certain acts which he had knowledge of. The record of the Prophet's words and deeds were recorded in narrative ahadith, reports that were transmitted before finally being compiled in authoritative collections decades after the death of the Prophet.
2. **Importance:** It occupies a very important position in Islamic Law; only second to the Quran. The Quran lays down the general principles of the Shariah, but does not mention its details. Sunnah is not only considered as complementary to the Quran, but also as having necessarily interpretative character vis-à-vis the Holy Book. It not only expounds the meanings of the broad principles of law laid down in Quran, but as far as possible, also makes up for the supplementary details of the law, wherever necessary. It further explains and interprets a law briefly contained or alluded to in the Holy Book. For example, it contains the guidance for the laws of inheritance, punishment, family affairs and 'Ibadat'. But the ways of actually carrying out these were explained only through Sunnah of the Holy Prophet. Thus, the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet is embodiment of the Quranic code of life. It provides guidance in all walks of life-individual and social, material and moral, economic and political, legal and cultural, national and international. This particular nature of the Prophet's Sunnah enhances its importance in the Islamic legal framework, as it serves as a model for the precise application of the Quranic fundamentals in a definite situation.
3. **Quranic Authority:** According to the belief of the Muslim jurists, the authority for Sunnah as a source of law is originally contained in the Quran itself.
 - a) The Holy Prophet's lofty personality is the last recipient of Allah's commandments. Therefore, his conduct and character have been declared in Quran as a specimen to be followed and adopted by man so as to attain nearness to Allah and the ultimate salvation.

Allah says in the Quran:
"You have indeed in the Apostle of Allah, an excellent pattern of conduct."
 - b) The Holy Quran says that the Prophet never said anything concerning the duties and obligations of the believer, nor ever gave any judgement, except what he was ordered to do by Allah.

"Nor does he speak of (his own) desire. It is naught save a revelation that is revealed".

That is why, in the Holy Quran Allah has, on many occasions, exhorted the believers to obey the Prophet, and to do what he commands them to do and to abstain from what he forbids.

"And whatsoever the Prophet gives you, take it and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain from it".

Likewise, there is a report which says that the Prophet asked Maadh bin Jabal on the latter's appointment as governor of Yemen as to how he would decide a case brought before him, to which Maad replied that he would decide according to the book of Allah and if did not find in it then according to the Sunnah of the Prophet and even if not found then he would decide according to his own judgment.
4. **Conclusion:**

"And whoso opposes the Messenger after the guidance (of Allah) has been manifested to him, and follows other than the believer's way, We appoint him that to which he himself has turned to, and expose him to hell."

IJMA OR CONSENSUS

1. **Definition:** Ijma constitutes the third source of Muslim law. The word "Ijma" is derived from "Jama" which means collecting or gathering together. It literally means agreeing upon or uniting in opinion. According to the jurists "Ijma" means consensus of opinion of the Mujtahids or an agreement of Muslim jurists, of a particular age on a question of law within the limits warranted by the Qur'an and the Sunnah.
2. **Kinds of Ijma:** Ijma is of two kinds, namely, Ijma-i-Azimah and Ijma-i-Rukhsah. If all the Mujtahids of an age give their consent to a particular point, it is called Ijma-i-Azimah. If there is no unanimity among the Mujtahids on a point but the community as a whole accepts the decision given by some Mujtahids, it is Ijma-i-Rukhsah.
3. **Ijma As Third source of Islamic Law:** Ijma' owes its origin to the principle of Shura (mutual consultation) as stated in the Quran, to ascertain the will of the Community, "their affairs are settled by mutual consultation." It is said in the Tarikh al-fiqh by Al-Khizri that the commandments which stand proved by Wahi are not many but the incidents that occur in our day to day life are innumerable. If their character and concerned mandate in the light of Wahi is not determined, they will remain uncharacterized and the claim of the perfection of din (Islam) shall become questionable. It is, therefore, expedient if authority is conferred upon the learned ones in Shari'ah to discover and apply the rules of the Shari'ah and find correct legal mandate in accordance with the principles and rules of the Shari'ah for any matter not specified in the Quran and the Sunnah.
4. **Conditions of Validity:**
 - i. Unanimity of opinion among the participants is essential for an Ijma to have an absolute authority.
 - ii. It should not directly or indirectly contravene the provisions of Quran and Hadith.
5. **Quranic Authority:** The authority of Ijma as a source of law is founded on certain Quranic and traditional texts.
 - i. "My followers will never agree upon what is wrong". (Hadith)
 - ii. "Obey God and obey the Prophet and those of you who have authority." (Quran)
 - iii. "Allah supports the Jamat". (Hadith)
 - iv. "Whatever is good before God is good before Muslims and whatever is bad before Muslims is bad before God." (Hadith)
6. **Qualifications of a Mujtahid:**

It should be remembered that every Tom, Dick and Harry is not entitled to legislate for the Islamic society. We do not recognize the right of every passerby to give verdict on legal problems. Undoubtedly, it requires profound legal knowledge and a trained mind to enable one to speak with authority on any legal matter. The following are few qualifications necessary for a Mujtahid.

 1. He must be conversant with the science of Usul and Furu i.e principles and the material science of law.
 2. He must be well-versed in the Quran.
 3. He must be able to distinguish between authentic and weak traditions.
 4. He should be capable of making legal deductions and should possess sufficient legal acumen and understanding.
 5. He must be thoroughly acquainted with the customs and usages of the country and with the habits of the people.

QIYAS OR ANALOGY

1. **Definition:** The root meaning of Qiyas is comparing with a thing. It is a reasoning based upon analogy for cases not expressly provided for by the Holy Quran or the Hadith. The jurists look for a case resembling it in the Holy Quran or Hadith or Ijma and by reasoning on the basis of analogy arrive at a decision. The scholar is not creating a new law, but extending legislation to a new situation.

Abu al-Hasan Basri has defined "Qiyas" as the "extension of law from the original (asl) to a particular case (fara) on the basis of analogical deduction with a view that the Mujtahid discovers the cause (illah) underlying them." This process must have four elements, namely a) an original text (nass), b) the object of qiyas, c) the rule deduced, and d) the cause.

2. **Condition of Validity:** A Qiyas must be founded on the law established by the text of the Quran, tradition or Ijma, without changing the law itself. Since it is recognized fact that a Mujtahid may err in his judgement, a Qiyas of one generation may be rejected by a following generation. Thus it is inferior as a source of law that the first three sources.

3. **Quranic Authority:**

- i. "We relate these examples for people to think over and only those can understand them who know."
- ii. "So learn the lesson. O you who have eyes."

4. **Some illustrations of Qiyas:**

- A woman appeared before the Prophet and related that her mother had undertaken before God to perform Hajj but died before that. "Should I perform on her behalf", asked she. The Prophet replied, "Of course you do, what do you think if your mother had died owing a debt, would not you discharge it?" It is argued that Prophet applied analogy in this case.
- As a second illustration we may take the law which prohibits drunkenness. In Quran only Sharab is specified to be forbidden. The effective cause of this law is taken to be intoxication or 'Nasha'. A deduction is therefore made that whatever intoxicates is prohibited.
- A striking example of the Qiyas is the question put to jurists when Prince Sultan ibn Salman or Saudi Arabia travelled aboard the US space shuttle in 1985. The scholars or ulema were asked which direction the prince should face to offer his prayers, since determining the direction of Makkah would be difficult while orbiting the earth. The jurists decided that he should face to the front of the shuttle, drawing an analogy from the practice of the Prophet. When he was travelling and unable to stop for prayer, he offered them seated on camel-back, facing whichever direction the camel happened to be walking.

IJTEHAD

1. **Definition:** Literally Ijtihad means striving or searching. But in the technical language of fiqh and Shariah, it means the striving to interpret the nass of the Quran and Sunnah of the Prophet in order to adopt them to the new conditions of the Muslim life and society, but within the precedents laid down by Mujtahids, especially four schools of thought.
2. **Types:** Ijtihad is of two types i.e Ijtihad mutlaq and Ijtihad Muqaiyid. Ijtihad Mutlaq is one in which interpretation of Quran and Sunnah is independent of opinions and judgments of the earlier jurists and their precedents. In Ijtihad Muqaiyyad, the scope of interpretation is within the decisions and opinions of founding jurists.
3. **Authority:**
 - a) “The vilest of animals in Allah’s sight are the deaf and the dumb, who do not understand.”
 - b) “And to those who exert We show Our path”.
 - c) “In the creation of heavens and earth and the alteration of days and nights are signs for men of understanding.”
 - d) While appointing Maudh bin Jabl as the governor of Yemen, the Prophet expressly appreciated him when he said that failing Quran and Sunnah he would apply his judgment in deciding any matter.
 - e) The system of making a call (azan) for the prayers was established after consultation with the companions on the suggestion of Hazrat Umar.
4. **Status of Ijtihad in modern times:** With the time, however, the impulse of Ijtihad faltered and was replaced by the doctrine of taqlid or blind imitation, which not only discouraged individual interpretation but prohibited it. This was mainly due to the difference of opinion among the jurist about the status of Mujtahid in the modern times.

As Islam crosses into the 15th century Hijri, the need for Ijtihad is clear. Faced with new technologies, new philosophies and new challenges, Muslim thinkers demand the right to individual interpretation.

Tauheed:

1. **Introduction:** Tauheed (the Unity of God) is the ground norm of Islam. It occupies a pivotal position in Islamic Ideology. No explanation of Islamic concepts of man, life, universe and the Islamic world view can be valid without reference to this fundamental postulate. The concept of the Unity of God is so important in Islam that 1,24,000 prophets were sent to guide humanity whenever this concept was corrupted over the years.
2. **Meaning:** Tauheed means that there is absolutely no one worthy of worship other than Allah. Before Him alone all heads should bow in submission and adoration and He is the only and exclusive possessor of all powers. All are in need of His favours, and all should solicit His help and guidance. Quran says: "Say He is Allah, the One and the Only; Allah the Eternal, the Absolute; He begets not nor is He begotten. And there is none comparable to Him."
3. **Concept of Unity of God In Other Religions:** This belief is as old as humanity and a religious truth. Islam claims that all the great prophets preached this fundamental truth and all the scriptures originally contained it in a pure form. But this belief was contaminated over and over again and prophets were raised among all nations to restore this very faith. As we know that Christ was a monotheist of the purest order but the doctrine of Trinity vitiated the monotheism of Christianity. Zoroaster too was essentially a monotheist though the purity of his monotheism has been vitiated by the belief in two relatively independent and hostile principles of Light and Darkness with Yazdan and Aharman pitched against each other. Hindus too were monotheist and believed in Akme Bad Ditian; but later on they became idolaters.
4. **Quranic Argument on Unity of God:** We see the beautiful panorama of the heavens and the earth, the sun and the moon and the stars floating in an endless space with an immaculate order and perfect design. This leads to the belief in the existence of a Supreme Power, Who not only created but also governs and sustains the entire universe. Quran says: "Adore not the sun and the moon, adore Him Who created them."

Secondly, it is necessary that all the divine attributes and powers must vest in One Being- it is virtually impossible for two or more personalities having all the powers and attributes equally to coexist. Therefore, there must be Only One Supreme Being having control over all others. This brings man to the Reality i.e Tauheed. Quran says: "Had there been any gods in them except Allah, they would have been in a state of disorder. So glory be to Allah, the Lord of the Throne."

Le Compte Dunnoy in his book the "Fate of Humanity" writes: "If we make a critical assessment of the findings collected by science and make logical deductions, the result will lead us inevitably to One God."

5. **Individual Effects:**
 - a) Firm belief in the Unity of God **inspires bravery in man**. The believer knows that Allah alone is the possessor of all powers and besides Him there is none who can help or harm a person or who has any authority or influence.
 - b) This belief **saves man from unnecessary frictions** as man gets a straight path. One, who believes that none but God is his guide and leader in all matters- spiritual or temporal, shuns all others deviant courses and saves himself from stumbling at every step of his life by following the wrong paths and ultimately in the life hereafter he is crowned with success.
 - c) In the quest of One True God, man humbled himself before sun and moon, stars and galaxies, sky and earth, rivers and oceans, even beasts and animals. This pantheistic notion demoralized and degraded man and brought about **man's servitude** and compelled him to bow before millions of gods and deities. Belief in Tauheed **elevates man's rank** to his actual rank given to him by God i.e. of Ashraf ul Makhhlukat.
6. **Collective Effects:**
 - a) From the Unity of God follows as a corollary the **unity of humanity**. The Quran has repeatedly asserted that all humanity is one and all human beings have been created from one being (Adam). Therefore, all nations should try to agree in fundamentals, the most essential of which is that there is only One God and all men and all creatures are His Family. Quran says: "All the creatures form the family of God, and he is best loved by God who is best in actions." The brotherhood of man is a direct corollary from the Unity of God. The unity of moral law too is a corollary from the Unity of God. However nations may differ in their customs and modes of living, there must be one objective morality for all.
 - b) The Holy Quran teaches that, God being One and humanity one, therefore, divine guidance has not been confined to any particular race. Rather, entire humanity has been blessed with it during the course of human history. This gives the principle of unity in respect of Divine Revelation. Also, this teaching provides the venue of appeal to the religions of the world for casting off the shells of later accretions, perversions and distortions brought into existence by human ignorance, or vested interests.

Tauheed (Islamic Monotheism) has three aspects:

1. Oneness of the Lordship of Allah- **“Tauheed ar-Rububiyya”**. To believe that, there is only one Lord for all the universe, its Creator, Organizer, Planner, Sustainer and Giver of Security etc., and that is Allah.
2. Oneness of the worship of Allah - **“Tauheed al-Uluhiyya”**. To believe that none has the right to be worshipped {e.g. by praying, invoking, asking for help (from the unseen), swearing, slaughtering sacrifices, giving charity, Fasting, and Pilgrimage etc.,} but Allah.
3. Oneness of the Names and the Qualities of Allah, **“Tauheedul-Asma-was-sifaat”**. To believe that:
 - i. We must not name or qualify Allah except with what He or His Messenger (Peace be upon him) has named or qualified Him.
 - ii. None deserve to be named or qualified with the definitive Names or Attributes of Allah; e.g. Al-Karim (Most Generous).
 - iii. We must confirm all of Allah’s Attributes which Allah has stated in His Book (the Quran) or mentioned through His Messenger Muhammad (Peace be upon him), without changing them or ignoring them completely or twisting the meanings or giving resemblance to any of the created things.

Zakat

1) **Introduction:** One of the five fundamental pillars upon which rests the majestic edifice of Islam is Zakat; which the materially well-endowed give to the poor and needy to seek the pleasure of Allah. It covers moral, social and economic spheres.

Morally, it washes away the greed of money from the hearts of the rich;

Socially, it makes rich alive to the social responsibility they have; and

Economically, it restrains the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few and also makes up for equal opportunity for all. *towards the have-nots*

2) **Meaning:** The word Zakat has been derived from the word "ZAKA" which means 'it grew' or 'it purified' and the title is appropriate because Zakat not only grows one's wealth but also purifies those who own it. Quran says:

"The likeness of those who opened their wealth in Allah's way is as the likeness of a grain which grows seven ears, in every ear a hundred grains."

3) **Importance/Objectives/Benefits of Zakat:**

a) **Self-discipline through purification of Soul:**

Riches breed miserliness, selfishness, and greed. As the Prophet said:

"The root of evil is the love of worldly things"

The best remedy against these evils is the charitable disposal of one's money. Zakat purges the lust of wealth, purifies our wealth and our soul from the evils of this world. It keeps one away from sin and saves the giver from moral ills arising from the love and greed for wealth;

Quran says:

"Take alms of their wealth, wherewith you may cleanse and purify them".

b) **Elimination of Social Destitution:**

All wealth and riches belong to God. It is entrusted to us by Him, so that we may satisfy our needs and help our less fortunate brothers to satisfy their requirements. Thus it prevents the spread of beggary, because the indigent, the defectives, the crippled, the orphans and the widows and likewise are duly provided for, and saved from the humiliation and disgrace of begging for alms. *Risk distributed to all.*

Quran says:

"Verily, Allah has ordained the payment of Zakat on them. It will be taken from them (rich) and returned to the poor."

In fact, Zakat is not a charity but a compulsory payment by the rich to the state. It is a social claim, as a matter of right and not as charity, on the wealth of the rich. By paying poor due the rich are, in fact, paying back their debt to the poor and society. If they fail to pay this social debt, they are committing a sin in the eyes of God and a crime against the law of the land. Thus by paying the poor due the rich are not doing any favour to the poor or society but they are doing their normal moral as well as legal duty. *Social claim not a charity*

It also helps in the development of a healthy and good spirit in the community. It makes the rich generous to the poor and makes the poor thankful and better off. *Healthy Social Environment*

Zakat functions as a social security for all. Those who have enough money today pay for what they have. If they need money tomorrow they will get what is necessary to help them live decently. *Social Security*

c) **Checks the Concentration of Wealth and Exploitation of Poor:**

The system of capitalism has led to the concentration of wealth in fewer hands and to the growing impoverishment of the man. Communism merely changed the individualistic monopoly-capitalism to 'state capitalism'. The institution of Zakat is meant to correct such a situation and instead establish right and just balance between the two extremes through equitable distribution of wealth, so that no one in the community is deprived of its share and benefits. Both the rich and the poor share the social wealth for the satisfaction of their needs.

Islam wants every man and woman to live in honour and dignity. It wants to build up the community on very strong moral and economic foundations. It can never tolerate poverty amid plenty; some indulging in extreme luxuries while other rot in extreme poverty. The institution of Zakat becomes not only a leveling factor but also a means for the uplift of the nation as a whole.

Economically, Zakat is the best check against hoarding. Those who do not invest their wealth but prefer to save or hoard would see their wealth dwindling year after year at the rate of the payable Zakat. This helps increase production and stimulates supply because it is a redistribution of income that enhances the demand by putting more real purchasing power in the hands of poor. *depreciate*

d) Zakat is equal in importance to Namaz:

If Namaz is the bodily supplication, Zakat is the financial devotion to God. It is a proof of our faith to our Master by making material sacrifice in obedience to His Command and His pleasure. At most places in Quran, Zakat is mentioned along with Salat.

“Lo! Those who believe and do good deeds and establish prayer and pay the Zakat, their reward is with their Lord.”

Therefore, anyone who believes in God, establishes regular prayer but refuses to pay the poor due is not considered a true believer. Holy Prophet once remarked:

“I have been commanded to fight against the people till they testify that there is no god but Allah and they establish prayer and pay Zakat....”

The first Caliph, Hazrat Abu Bakr, declared Jihad against those people who called themselves Muslims but refused to pay the poor due. He said:

“By Allah, I would fight against him who makes a distinction between prayer and Zakat, because they are put together in the Quran.”

Zakat is a special favour of Allah on this Ummah, and in this manner the wealth which is spent in the way of Allah is made lawful for use by the poor and the needy.

Zakat payer pays his dues to Allah as an act of worship, a token of submission and an acknowledgment of gratitude. The receiver of Zakat receives it as a grant from Allah out of His bounty, a favor for which he is thankful to Allah.

THE PUNISHMENT FOR NOT GIVING ZAKAT:

Allah says in the Qur'an:

"And there are those who hoard gold and silver and do not spend it in the way of Allah, announce to them a most grievous penalty (when) on the Day of Judgment heat will be produced out of that wealth in the fire of Hell. Then with it they will be branded on their forehead and their flanks and backs. (It will be said to them) This is the treasure which you hoarded for yourselves, taste then the treasure that you have been hoarding." [Tawbah 34-35]

Rasoolullah (Sallallaahu Álayhi Wasallam) has said;

1. "The nation that does not give Zakaat, Allah will bring about a drought on them (i.e. necessities of life will become scarce)."
2. "The person on whom Allah has bestowed wealth, and he does not give Zakaat, on the Day of Qiyaamah, his wealth will be turned into a venomous bald serpent which will wind around his neck and bite his jaws and say: "I am your wealth, I am your treasure." [Bukhari]
3. Once Rasoolullah (Sallallaahu Álayhi Wasallam) saw gold bangles on the hands of two women. He enquired if they gave the Zakaat for the bangles. They replied "No." Rasoolullah (Sallallaahu Álayhi Wasallam) then said: 'Do you wish on the Day of Qiyaamah that you be made to dress in bangles of fire?' They replied: "No." He then said: 'Give Zakaat on them.' [Tirmizi]

Pre-conditions of Zakat:

- a) “You spend not except in search of Allah’s pleasure”.
- b) “O you who believe; spend of the good things which you have earned.”
- c) “And seek not the bad (with intent) to spend thereof (in charity)”.
- d) “O you who believe! Render not vain your alms giving by reproach and injury, like him who spends his wealth only to be seen by men.”

Eight Heads of Zakat:

The alms are only for:

- 1) The poor,
- 2) The needy,
- 3) Those who collect them,
- 4) New converts to Islam,
- 5) To free the captives,
- 6) To free the debtors,
- 7) For the cause of Allah, and
- 8) The way farers.