

What is humanity and how Islam is the flag bearer of humanity?

Introduction:

Islam is not just a religion it is a Din. A din which is universal and well as is a complete code of life. So, out of all the aspects, including social, political, financial, economical aspects, in which Islam guides, a very important element is Islam's guidance on humanity. Within this domain, Islam provides guidance on character building, charity, human rights, morality, self-service, and many others.

Humanity:

Lexicology:

The term humanity can be analyzed as follows:

The root of the word is "human", which refers to the species *Homo sapiens*. While, the suffix "-ity" is used to denote a quality, state, or a condition.

Definition:

Humanity, in a broad sense, refers to the collective quantities, attributes, and potentialities of human beings as a specie. It encompasses the shared values, ethics, and aspirations that bind individuals together in a common human experience.

Islam and humanity:

In the context of Islam, being the "flag bearer of humanity" means that Islam provides a comprehensive framework for guiding human behaviour and relationships in a way that promotes the well-being and welfare of all individuals, regardless of their backgrounds or beliefs.

Here are some key points to consider in understanding why Islam is believed to be the flag bearer of humanity:

1- Islam encourages welfare of mankind

Islam focuses a lot on the welfare of mankind, due to its prime importance. As a famous humanitarian Abdul Sattar Edhi said:

"There is no religion in the world higher than humanity"

Similarly, scholar Dr. Wasfiullah M. Abbas from Al-Azhar university of Egypt writes in his book "Key Features of Islam" that:

"Key feature of Islam is practice of social services"

So, Islam secures rights of all segments of society. It commands its followers to do Falah for entire humanity.

2- focus on Charity:

Islam ensures charity through biggest financial worship called "Zakat". Islam aims for the elimination of poverty from grass root level through money circulation. Allah focusses the same in Surah-Al-Bakara Verse #177:

"Righteousness is in one who believes in Allah, and gives wealth, in spite of love for it."

In Islam, Islamic state is given the authority to collect Zakat by force, if public is not paying willingly. Zakat is so important that it is a part of five pillars of Islam, and its practice aims to alleviate poverty and promote economic equity.

3- Social Justice and Equity:

In Islam, all individuals are considered equal regardless of their race, ethnicity, social status, or economic status. Quran emphasizes the importance of fairness in dealings with others even if it is against their own interests. Allah says in Surah Al-Maida, Verse #8:

"O who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allah, witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is near to righteousness."

Similarly, The prophet Muhammad (PBUH) also advocated

for justice and fairness in all matters, regardless of a person's social status, ethnicity or background.

4- Caring for Orphans and Vulnerable Individuals:

Caring for orphans and vulnerable individuals hold a profound significance in Islam. At various instances in Qur'an and Sunnah the treatment of orphans with love, care, and support is highlighted. Allah mentions the treatment with orphans as best in Surah-Al-Baqra, Verse #220:

“To this world and hereafter. And they ask you about orphans. Say, Improvement for them is best.”

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) also advocated for the importance of Orphan's care in Islam, and highlighted the rewards and blessings associated with their proper care.

5- Rights of the Neighbors:

Fulfillment of rights of the neighbours are considered as fundamental aspect of muslim's ethical and moral responsibility. Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) also mentioned to take neighbours as a family members in various Hadiths, this highlight the significance of neighbour's rights. Similarly, emphasis is placed by Quran in Verse #36 of Surah-Nisa:

"Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him, and to parents do good, and to relatives, orphans, the needy, the near neighbour, the neighbour farther away..."

- Promotion of Knowledge and Education:

The importance of knowledge and education in Islam can be interpreted by this, that the first revelation in Islam is known as "Iqra", which means "Read" or "Recite". In Quran, this revelation is a part of surah Al-Alaq, that translates as follows:

"Read, in the name of your Lord who created.
Created man from a clinging substance.
Read, and your Lord is the most Generous -
Who taught by the pen -
Taught man that which he knew not."

It is encouraged by Islam to seek both religious and worldly education. Where religious education connects a man with Allah, the worldly education teaches ways and norms to form a civilized society.

- Environmental Stewardship:

Islamic teachings stress that the Earth and its resources are a trust from God, to be utilized responsibly and sustainably. Muslims are instructed to be

mindful of their actions and impact on the environment, and to avoid wastefulness and extravagance.

The Quran mentions that

“Eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess.”

Similarly, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) also discouraged wastefulness, especially water. Following Hadees from Al-Tarmizi intensifies saving water:

“Do not waste even if performing ablution on the bank of a fast flowing large river.”

8 - Promotion of Peace and Harmony

Promotion of peace and harmony are integral to the ethical and moral framework of Islam. It reflects deep-seated commitment to justice, compassion, and the well-being of humanity. Allah focussed the same teachings in Verse # 61 of Surah Al-Anfal as:

“And if they incline to peace, then incline to it and rely upon Allah. Indeed, it is He who is the Hearing, the Knowing.”

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) advocated for peaceful resolutions to conflicts and discouraged aggression and violence.

• Emphasis on good characters

In Surah-Al-Hujrat, Verse-15, Allah tells how a man's character should be. Islam places great emphasis on the cultivation of a good character as a vital component of a believer's faith and spiritual journey. It is through embodying virtuous qualities that individuals are able to reflect the true essence of their faith and contribute positively to their communities and the world at large. Allah, while referring to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in Quran (Verse #04, from Surah-Al-Qalam)

"And indeed, you are of a great moral character."

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is considered the exemplar of moral conduct in Islam, and ~~was~~^{is} described as having impeccable character.

• Advocacy for fair Treatment of Non-Muslims

Recognizing the inherent dignity and right of an individual, Islam advocates for fair treatment of non-Muslims. It encourages dialogue, understanding, and fostering of coexistence in diverse societies. As Allah says in Verse # 08 of Surah-Al-Mumtahanah:

"Allah does not forbid you from those who do not fight you because of religion and do not expel you from your homes - from being righteous toward them and acting justly toward them."

11- Injunctions against discrimination

Islam stands firmly against discrimination of any kind, be it based on race, ethnicity, social status, or any other criterion. The Quran and Hadith contain explicit injunctions against discriminatory practices and emphasize the equality of all individuals before God. One of the most powerful verses in this regard is from Surah Al-Hujrat, Verse #13, stated below:

“O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Allah is knowing and aware”

12- Visiting the Sick

Visiting the sick, ~~rooted~~ rooted in Islamic concept of brotherhood and community support, is not only an act of compassion but also a mean to get great rewards and blessing in Islam. As mentioned in At-Tarmidhi, Ali bin Abi Talib reported that he heard prophet Muhammad (PBUH) saying:

“When a muslim visits a sick at dawn, seventy thousand angels keep on praying for him till dusk. If he visits him in the evening, ~~seventy~~ ^{seventy} thousand angels keep

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on praying for him till ^{morning} ~~evening~~ ^{and} he will
have (his share of) reaped fruits in Jannah."

13- Animal Rights:

While the concept of animal rights evolved with time, Islam have long advocated for animals rights and their humane treatment. Animals, being a part of God's creation, deserve to be treated with compassion and kindness. Prophet Muhammad PBUH reportedly said:

"Whoever is kind to the creatures of God,
he is kind to himself" (Bukhari)

likewise, Prophet (PBUH) also discouraged inhumane treatment with animals. ^{e.g.} He (PBUH) reprimanded a man because his camel was thirsty.

Conclusion:

All in all, Islam is a religion that is universal in nature and has been guiding humanity from so long. Such diversified guidance in any field of human life, along with clear distinction of right and wrong, and above that the promise of rewards in life hereafter. This all have made Islam only religion in this world that has been the flag bearer of humanity for the last 1400 years.