

ISLAMIYAT

ISLAM AND IT'S SALIENT FEATURES:

MEANING OF ISLAM:

Here's a breakdown of the meaning of Islam in different contexts:

Literal Meaning:

In Arabic, Islam comes from the verb meaning "to surrender" or "to submit." Islam is originated from the word س-ل-م (S-L-M) which is related to concepts of to make peace with, submission, safety, and peace.

Contextual Meaning:

In the religious context, Islam refers to the act of completely surrendering oneself to the will of Allah. This submission is seen as bringing peace and purpose to life of an individual.

Islamic Meaning:

Within Islam, the concept of submission goes beyond just following rules. It's about a complete way of life that encompasses beliefs, practices, and actions. Muslims believe following God's will leads to a good life in this world and the afterlife.

SALIENT FEATURES OF ISLAM:

Following are the salient features of Islam:

- Monotheism
- Belief in Prophethood
- Belief in Angels
- Belief in Scriptures
- Belief in the day of Judgement
- Belief in Divine Decree & Predetermination
- Pillars of Islam
- Islam as Complete code of life
- Promotion of humanism
- Provision of human rights
- Provision of animal rights
- Environmental protection
- Medical services
- Education and research
- Provision of justice
- Nationalism
- Egalitarian, tolerant and fraternal Patience
- Moralism

- Non-exclusivist and provides the concept of community
- Freedom

1. Monotheism:

Monotheism or Tauheed is the first pillar of Islam. Tawheed, meaning "oneness" or "unity" in Arabic, is the core principle of Islam. It refers to the belief in one God, Allah, who is the sole creator, sustainer, and ruler of the universe. This oneness of God encompasses His attributes, actions, and worship.

Key aspects:

Here are some key aspects of Tawheed:

- **Uniqueness of God:**

There is no deity worthy of worship except Allah. He has no partners or equals in His divinity.

- **Absolute Power:**

Allah is omnipotent (all-powerful), omniscient (all-knowing), and omnipresent (present everywhere). He is independent and needs nothing from His creation.

- **Divine Attributes:**

Allah possesses perfect attributes like mercy, justice, wisdom, and power. These attributes are unique to Him and cannot be shared with any created being.

Importance of Tawheed:

Tawheed is the foundation of Islamic faith and practice. It liberates believers from worshipping false idols or attributing divine qualities to creations. It fosters a sense of complete dependence on Allah and motivates believers to live a life according to His will.

Categories of Tauheed:

There are three main categories of Tawheed:

- **Tawheed ar-Rububiyah (Oneness of Lordship):**

Believing Allah is the sole creator and sustainer of everything.

- **Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah (Oneness of Worship):**

Directing all worship solely to Allah.

- **Tawheed al-Asma wa Sifat (Oneness of Names and Attributes):**

Believing in Allah's unique and perfect attributes as described in the Quran and authentic Hadiths.

"Say, 'He is Allah, [who is] One, Allah, the Eternal Refuge. He neither begets nor is born, Nor is there to Him any equivalent.'"

(Quran 112:1-4)

"The greatest matter for which I have been commanded is to worship Allah alone and to disassociate from all that is worshipped besides Him."

(Sahih al-Bukhari)

2. **Belief in Risalat (Prophethood):**

Prophethood is a central concept in Abrahamic religions, including Islam. It refers to the belief that God chooses and sends individuals, known as prophets, to humanity to deliver divine messages and guide them towards the right path. Prophets are seen as bridges between the divine realm and the human world.

Concept of prophethood:

- **Divine Selection:**

Prophets are not self-proclaimed. They are believed to be chosen by God and receive revelations through various means like dreams, visions, or direct communication.

- **Messengers of Guidance:**

Prophets are entrusted with messages from God. These messages can be about ethical conduct, social justice, worshipping God alone (monotheism), and warnings of the afterlife.

- **Role Models:**

Prophets are exemplary figures who live according to the teachings they convey. Their lives serve as models for believers to follow.

- **Confirmation and Continuity:**

Many religions believe prophets come throughout history, confirming and sometimes renewing previous messages. For instance, Islam sees prophets like Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and ultimately Muhammad as part of a chain of prophets, with Muhammad being the final prophet.

Purposes of prophethood:

- To convey God's message and teachings.
- To correct misconceptions and social injustices.
- To guide humanity towards a moral and ethical life.
- To warn people of the consequences of disobeying God.
- To serve as role models for believers.

"Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but the Messenger of Allah and the seal of the prophets. And Allah is Knowing of all things."

(Quran 33:40)

"I am the last of the prophets, and there will be no prophet after me."

(Sahih Muslim)

3. Belief in Malaikah (Angels):

Belief in unseen beings like angels who carry out God's commands.

Origin and Meaning:

- The Arabic word for angel is "malaika," plural of "malak."
- It comes from a root meaning "messenger" or "to control," reflecting their roles.

Nature of Malaika:

- Created from light by Allah.
- Incorporeal beings, unseen in this life.
- Do not have free will, but act in perfect obedience to Allah.
- Assigned specific duties and tasks.

Roles of Malaika:

- **Messengers:**
Deliver revelations to prophets (e.g., Gabriel to Prophet Muhammad).
- **Record Keepers:**
Record a person's good and bad deeds.
- **Executors of Divine Will:**
Carry out Allah's commands, such as the Angel of Death (Izrail) taking souls.
- **Guardians:**
Watch over humans and the natural world.

Some Named Angels:

- **Gabriel (Jibril):** Messenger of revelations.
- **Michael (Mikael):** Responsible for rain and mercy.
- **Izrail:** Angel of Death.
- **Israfil:** Angel who will blow the trumpet on Judgement Day.
- **Malak:** Guardian of Hellfire.

Importance of Belief in Malaika:

- Strengthens faith in the unseen and Allah's power.
- Reminds believers of their accountability for actions.

"Say, [I believe] in Allah and in His angels and His scriptures and His messengers and the Last Day; and in the decree of good and evil [coming] from Allah. And I am of the believers."

(Quran 2:185)

"The faith of none of you will be complete until you believe in Allah and His angels, His Books, His Messengers, and the Last Day, and in the good and evil of divine predestination."

(Sahih al-Bukhari)

4. Belief in Kutub (Scriptures):

Belief in divinely revealed scriptures, with the Quran being the final revelation.

In Islam, the concept of *kutub* (Arabic for "books") refers to the divinely revealed scriptures believed to be sent by Allah (God) to guide humanity. These scriptures hold a significant place in Islamic faith, and believing in them is one of the six pillars of Islam.

Concept of kutub:

- **Content:**
The kutub encompass various revealed texts. The Quran, the central and final revelation to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), is the most prominent. However, Muslims also believe in the authenticity of earlier scriptures revealed to other prophets.
- **Quranic View:** The Quran acknowledges the importance of these earlier scriptures, considering them guidance for their respective communities. However, Muslims believe the Quran supersedes them and is the complete and final revelation.

- **Concept of Tahrif:** The Islamic concept of tahrif refers to the belief that the original content of these earlier scriptures may have been altered or distorted over time. This is why the Quran is seen as the most reliable source of divine revelation.

Examples:

The Quran mentions some scriptures by name, including the,

- Tawrat (Torah) of Moses
- Zabur (Psalms) of David
- Injil (Gospel) of Jesus
- Quran of Prophet Muhammad
- Scrolls of Abraham and Moses.

Importance of Belief in Kutub:

- **Faith:**

Believing in the kutub demonstrates faith in Allah's communication with humanity throughout history.

- **Continuity:**

It establishes a connection between Islam and previous Abrahamic religions.

- **Understanding:**

Knowledge of earlier scriptures can provide context for understanding certain Quranic verses.

"We have indeed sent down to you a clear message [containing] proofs from Allah, and guidance and mercy for a people who submit."

(Quran 24:21)

"Leave what makes you doubt for what does not make you doubt. Truthfulness is peace of mind and falsehood is doubt."

(Sahih Muslim)

5. Yawm al-Qiyamah (Day of Judgement):

Belief in the Day of Judgement, resurrection, and life after death.

The Day of Judgement, known as Yawm al-Din in Arabic, is a fundamental belief in Islam. It signifies the end of the world as we know it and the beginning of the afterlife.

Key Concepts:

Here are some key points about this concept:

- **Resurrection and Judgement:**

All people will be resurrected from the dead and brought before Allah (God) to be judged for their deeds and beliefs during their lifetime.

- **Focus on Accountability:**

The purpose of the Day of Judgement is to ensure complete fairness. Every action, good or bad, will be weighed and people will be rewarded or punished accordingly.

- **Jannah (Paradise) and Jahannam (Hellfire):**

Those who are judged righteously will enter Jannah, a paradise filled with eternal bliss. Those who are judged negatively will be condemned to Jahannam, a place of punishment.

- **Uncertainty of the Timing:**

The exact date of the Day of Judgement is unknown to humanity. The Quran emphasizes its suddenness and encourages believers to live righteously in preparation.

- **Signs of the Day:**

Islamic traditions describe major and minor signs that will precede the Day of Judgement. These include natural disasters, the appearance of specific figures like the Dajjal (deceiver), and societal decline.

Importance of the Day of Judgement:

The belief in the Day of Judgement serves as a constant reminder for Muslims to live a moral and purposeful life. It emphasizes the importance of good deeds, faith, and following Islamic teachings.

"[It will be] the Day when people will stand before [the Lord of] the worlds."

(Quran 81:3)

"The Hour will not come until wealth becomes abundant, so much so that a man will be given a hundred dinars and will not be content with it, and until a tribulation afflicts the people of Madinah that will leave none of them but saying, "Oh, Allah! Oh, Allah!"

(Sahih al-Bukhari)

6. Qada & Qadar (Divine Decree & Predetermination):

Belief in God's divine plan and predetermination, while also maintaining human free will. Qada and Qadar, together meaning "divine decree and predestination," are Islamic concepts that deal with God's (Allah's) knowledge, power, and our free will. It's one of the six pillars of faith in Sunni Islam.

- **Qada (Divine Decree):**

Refers to Allah's all-encompassing knowledge and plan for everything that exists. This includes everything that has happened, is happening, and will happen in the universe.

- **Qadar (Predestination):**

Signifies the specific measure and details of Allah's plan. It's the outworking of the divine decree.

Key Points:

- **Allah's Knowledge:**

Allah knows everything, past, present, and future. This knowledge includes our choices.

- **Free Will:**

Islam affirms human free will. We are responsible for our choices and actions, and will be judged accordingly.

- **Reconciling the Two:**

How Allah's all-encompassing knowledge coexists with our free will is a theological discussion. Muslims believe they ultimately work together in Allah's perfect plan.

Finding Balance:

- Belief in Qada and Qadar should not lead to inaction or apathy. We are still encouraged to strive and make good choices.
- It can bring comfort knowing Allah has a plan, even in difficult times.

"Allah knows what is in the heavens and what is on the earth. And He knows what you conceal and what you reveal. And Allah is Knowing of all things."

(Quran 64:4)

"The ink has dried on the tablets (i.e., the records of destiny), and what is to be has been decreed."

(Sahih al-Bukhari)

7. The Five Pillars of Islam

The Five Pillars are the foundational practices of Islam, considered obligatory acts of worship for all Muslims. They are likened to pillars as they support and structure the Islamic faith.

1. Shahadah (Declaration of Faith):

This is the core belief and the foundation of Islamic identity. It involves uttering the following Arabic phrase with conviction:

"Ash-hadu an la ilaha illa Allah wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan rasul Allah"

I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.

"Say, 'He is Allah, [who is] One, Allah, the Eternal Refuge. He neither begets nor is born, Nor is there to Him any equivalent.'"

(Quran 112)

"Islam is built upon five pillars: The Shahadah that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, performing the prayer, paying the Zakat, Hajj for those who can afford it, and fasting the month of Ramadan."

(Sahih al-Bukhari 52)

2. Salah (Prayer):

Muslims perform five daily prayers at specific times throughout the day. These prayers involve standing, bowing, prostrating, and reciting Quran verses.

"And establish prayer and give zakāh, and bow with those who bow [in worship]."

(Quran 2:43)

"The first thing that will be accounted for from a man's deeds on the Day of Judgement is his prayer."

(Sahih al-Bukhari 52)

3. Zakat (Almsgiving):

Zakat is the mandatory giving of a fixed portion of one's wealth to the poor and needy. It purifies wealth and promotes social welfare.

"Zakāh expenditures are only for the poor and the needy, and for those employed to collect [zakāh], and for bringing hearts together [of those who have embraced Islam], and for freeing captives [or slaves], and for those in debt, and for the cause of Allah, and for the wayfarer; [thus it is] an obligation from Allah. And Allah is Knowing, Wise."

(Quran 9:60)

"Give zakāh to the deserving poor."

(Sahih al-Bukhari)

4. Sawm (Fasting):

Muslims abstain from food, drink, and marital relations from dawn to dusk during the holy month of Ramadan. It is a time for spiritual reflection and self-discipline.

"The month of Ramadan [is when] the Qur'an was revealed, so whoever of you witnesses the month shall fast therein."

(Quran 2:185)

Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) said, *"Islam has been built upon five pillars..." (including) "fasting the month of Ramadan."*

(Sahih al-Bukhari)

5. Hajj (Pilgrimage):

This pilgrimage to Mecca, the holiest city in Islam, is obligatory for all Muslims who are physically and financially able to undertake it at least once in their lifetime. It involves performing a set of rituals while uniting Muslims from all over the world.

"And Hajj [to the House of Allah] is a duty that owes Allah those who can afford the [journey] to it."

(Quran 22:27)

Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) said, *"Islam has been built upon five pillars..." (including) "Hajj for those who can afford it."*

(Sahih al-Bukhari)

8. Islam as a Complete Code of Life

Islam offers a comprehensive guide for living a fulfilling life. Here's how the Quran and Hadith support this concept:

Holistic Guidance:

The Quran provides direction for various aspects of life, including:

- **Worship:** Establishing daily prayers (Salah) is a cornerstone of Muslim life (Quran 2:43).
- **Social Interactions:** The Quran emphasizes fairness, kindness, and justice in dealings (Quran 5:8).
- **Economics:** Islamic principles on trade, interest, and charity (Zakat) promote economic balance (Quran 2:275-279).
- **Family Life:** Verses outline marriage, divorce, and inheritance laws (Quran 2:221-240).

Balance and Moderation:

Islam advocates a "middle way," avoiding extremes (Quran 2:143).

Emphasis on Knowledge:

The Quran encourages seeking knowledge and understanding (Quran 96:1-5).

Prophet Muhammad as Exemplar:

The Prophet's life (Sunnah) provides practical demonstrations of Islamic principles. Hadiths detail his actions and teachings in various situations.

Comprehensiveness of Sunnah:

Hadith collections cover diverse topics, from personal hygiene to leadership qualities.

Prophet's Teachings on Daily Life:

Hadiths provide guidance on everything from cleanliness to good manners to treatment of neighbors.

9. Islam and the Promotion of Humanity

Islam places a strong emphasis on treating all humans with respect and compassion. This core principle is woven throughout the Quran and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). Here are some key aspects of how Islam promotes humanity:

Oneness of Humanity:

The Quran establishes the common origin of humankind, stating that all people are descended from a single source (Quran 4:1). This concept fosters unity and discourages discrimination based on race or ethnicity.

Dignity of all People:

The Quran highlights the inherent dignity bestowed upon humanity by Allah (SWT).

"We have indeed honored the children of Adam, and We have provided them with [means of] transportation on land and sea and have provided them of [good] things and have favored them above many of those whom We have created"

(Quran 17:70).

This dignity translates to respecting the rights of all people, regardless of their faith or background.

Justice and Fairness:

Islam emphasizes the importance of justice and fair treatment for all.

"And when you judge between people, you judge with justice"

(Quran 6:89)

This applies to legal matters, social interactions, and even treatment of enemies during war.

Kindness and Compassion:

The Prophet (ﷺ) emphasized kindness and compassion as essential qualities.

"The most beloved of people by Allah is the most beneficial to people"

(Sahih al-Bukhari)

This encourages Muslims to actively help those in need and promote a society based on empathy.

Respect for All People:

Islam teaches respect for all people, even those who do not share the same faith. The Quran instructs Muslims to

"Say to those who do not believe: 'Peace'"

(Quran 29:46).

This fosters peaceful coexistence and dialogue between different communities. These are just some of the ways Islam promotes humanity. The Quran and the teachings of the Prophet (ﷺ) provide a comprehensive framework for building a just and compassionate society that respects the inherent dignity of all people.

10. Islam and the Promotion of Human Rights

Islam emphasizes the inherent dignity and rights of all humans. Here's how Islamic principles promote human rights:

Equality and Sanctity of Life:

The Quran establishes the fundamental equality of all humans before God.

"And We have honored the children of Adam - We have provided them with [carriage] on the land and sea and have favored them with good things abundantly, and have given them superiority over many of the creatures We have created."

(Quran 17:70)

Right to Life:

Taking an innocent life is strictly forbidden.

"Whoever kills a soul - unless for the killing of another soul or for spreading corruption in the land - it is as if he has killed all of humanity, and whoever saves a life it is as if he has saved all of humanity."

(Quran 5:32)

Justice and Fairness:

Islam emphasizes justice for all.

"Indeed, we have sent down to you the Book [Quran] in truth as a settlement between the people. So judge between them according to what Allah has revealed to you, and do not follow their desires if they deviate from the truth that has come to you."

(Quran 42:15)

Dignity and Respect:

Humiliating or degrading treatment is prohibited.

, *"All of you are from Adam, and Adam was created from dust"*

(Hadith narrated by Imam At-Tirmidhi)

Right to Property:

Stealing and taking advantage of others are forbidden.

"And do not consume one another's wealth unjustly."

(Quran 2:188)

Seeking Knowledge:

Education empowers individuals and promotes human development. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) emphasized the importance of knowledge, saying,

"Seeking knowledge is mandatory upon every Muslim"

(Hadith narrated by Ibn Majah).

Protecting the Vulnerable:

Islam teaches compassion and care for the less fortunate. The Prophet (PBUH) said,

"He who removes a worldly grief from a believer, Allah will remove from him a grief of the Hereafter"

(Hadith narrated by Muslim).

11. Islam and Animal Rights

Islam offers a comprehensive approach to animal welfare, emphasizing kindness and responsibility towards creatures. Here's how Islamic teachings promote animal rights:

Intrinsic Value of Animals:

The Quran highlights that animals are creations of Allah (God) with inherent value, not just resources for humans.

"[There are] signs in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alterations of night and day, and the ships which sail through the sea laden [with commodities], and the water which Allah sends down from the sky, reviving therewith the earth after its death, and the creeping creatures of which He has scattered through the earth - in all these things are signs for a people who possess intelligence."

(Quran 2:164)

Kindness and Compassion:

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) emphasized treating animals with kindness and avoiding unnecessary suffering.

"A man saw a dog panting and his tongue was lolling out, and the well was deep. The man went down the well and filled his waterskin and gave the dog water to drink. Allah approved of his action and forgave him."

(Sahih al-Bukhari)

"There is a reward for relieving the distress of any living creature."

(Sahih al-Bukhari)

Responsible Treatment:

Islam lays down guidelines for proper animal care, including providing food, water, and shelter. The Prophet (PBUH) said,

"Whoever keeps a beast of burden and starves it, Allah will punish him on the Day of Judgement."

(Musnad Ahmad)

Ethical Slaughter:

When taking an animal's life for food, Islam mandates minimizing suffering through swift and humane slaughter methods.

"Verily, Allah has prescribed kindness upon everything. So if you must slaughter, then slaughter in the best manner, and sharpen your knife well and let the animal die comfortably."

(Sahih Muslim)

Prohibition of Cruelty:

Islam strictly forbids cruelty to animals, including mutilation, overloading, and using them for entertainment that causes pain. The Prophet (PBUH) condemned those who torture animals, saying,

"A woman was punished in the Hellfire because she had imprisoned a cat and neither fed it nor set it free to eat from the vermin of the earth."

(Sahih al-Bukhari)

12. Islam and Environmental Protection

Islam promotes environmental protection as a religious duty, emphasizing humanity's role as stewards of the Earth. Muslims are advised to contribute to a sustainable and balanced environment. The Quran and Hadith provide a strong foundation for environmental responsibility within Islam. The Quran refers to humankind as "Khalifah" (vicegerent) of Allah on Earth, this implies responsibility for managing the Earth's resources wisely.

Balance and Moderation:

Islam encourages moderation in all things, including resource consumption.

"Eat and drink, but waste not by extravagance. Certainly, He does not like the extravagant."

[Quran 7:31]

Protection of Creation:

The Quran highlights the beauty and balance of creation, urging humanity to respect it.

"Do not corrupt the earth after it has been set in order."

[Quran 7:56]

Planting and Preservation:

Planting trees and preserving existing vegetation is encouraged. A Hadith states:

"If a Muslim plants a tree and diligently looks after it until it matures and produces fruit, then whatever is eaten from it is regarded as charity (sadaqah)."

[Sahih Bukhari]

Cleanliness:

Maintaining a clean environment is considered part of faith. Prophet Muhammad said:

"Cleanliness is half of faith."

[Sahih Muslim]

Avoiding Harm:

Unnecessary harm to the environment and living creatures is forbidden. The Prophet said:

"There is no creature on earth which does not glorify Allah (SWT) in its own way."

[Sahih Al-Bukhari]

13. Islam and the Promotion of Medical Services

Islam places a high value on health and wellbeing, actively promoting the pursuit of medical services and preventative measures. This emphasis is found throughout the Quran and Hadith, guiding Muslims towards a holistic approach to healthcare. The Quranic verses and Hadiths establish a strong foundation for Muslims to value their health and actively seek medical services when needed. They promote preventative measures, the pursuit of medical knowledge, and a balanced approach that combines seeking treatment with faith in God's will.

Preservation of Life:

The Quran highlights the importance of saving a life, equating it to saving all of humanity, it encourages Muslims to seek and provide medical care whenever possible.

Cleanliness:

Maintaining cleanliness is emphasized throughout the Quran, with practices like regular washing promoting hygiene and preventing the spread of disease.

Seeking Knowledge:

The Quran encourages the pursuit of knowledge in all domains, including medicine. This can be seen as advocating for the development and advancement of medical sciences.

Encouragement for Treatment:

The Prophet (PBUH) advised seeking treatment for illnesses, stating,

"Allah has created a cure for every disease"

(Sahih Muslim)

14. Islam and Egalitarianism, Tolerance, Patience and Fraternity:

Islam emphasizes equality, tolerance, and fraternity among believers. Patience, tolerance, known as Sabr in Arabic, is a cornerstone of Islamic faith and practice. It signifies perseverance, steadfastness, and contentment in the face of difficulties and trials.

Egalitarianism:

"O humanity, indeed We have created you from a male and female and made you into nations and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is the most fearing of Him. Surely Allah is Knowing, All-Wise."

(Quran 49:13)

"All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab, and a white has no superiority over a black nor a black has any superiority over a white except by piety

(Sahih Bukhari)

Tolerance:

"There is no compulsion in religion [acceptance of Islam]."

(Quran 2:256)

"Allah does not forbid you from those who do not fight you in religion and do not drive you out of your homes - from being kind to them and acting justly toward them. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly."

(Quran 60:8)

Fraternity:

"The believers are but brothers, so settle the matter between your brothers with justice."

(Quran 49:10)

"The believer is the mirror of the believer. He loves for his brother what he loves for himself."

(Sahih Muslim)

Reward for Patience:

"But if you endure patiently, verily, it is better for As-Sabirin (the patient ones, etc.)"

(Quran 16:126)

"Only those who are patient shall receive their rewards in full, without reckoning."

(Quran 39:10)

Allah Loves the Patient:

"And Allah loves As-Sabirin (the patient ones, etc.)" (Quran 3:146)

Seeking Help Through Patience:

"O you who believe! Seek help with patient perseverance and prayer, for Allah is with those who patiently persevere." (Quran 2:153)

15. Islam's Emphasis on Education: A Journey of Knowledge

Islam places immense importance on seeking knowledge and education. This emphasis is woven into the very fabric of the religion, evident from the first revelation itself. Here's how Islam stresses education, with references from Quran and Hadith:

The Importance of Seeking Knowledge:

The very first verses revealed to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in the Quran start with the command "Iqra," which translates to "Read!" This emphasizes the importance of acquiring knowledge and starting the journey of learning. The Quran highlights that knowledge comes from Allah (SWT), and He grants it to those who seek it.

"Seeking knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim"

(Sunan Al-Baihaqi)

Knowledge for All:

Islam promotes education for all, regardless of gender, race, or social status. There are no restrictions on who can seek knowledge. Both men and women are encouraged to learn and contribute to society.

The Value of Knowledge:

The Quran and Hadith emphasize the immense value of knowledge and its benefits in this life and the hereafter. A Hadith by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) says,

"The ink of the scholar is holier than the blood of the martyr"

(Sunan Ibn Majah)

Continuous Learning:

Islam encourages a lifelong pursuit of knowledge. There is no endpoint to learning, and Muslims are encouraged to keep seeking knowledge throughout their lives.

Sharing Knowledge:

The Quran and Hadith encourage Muslims to share their knowledge with others. A Hadith by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) states,

"Whosoever conceals knowledge, Allah will put a bridle on his heart on the Day of Judgement"
(Sahih al-Bukhari).

16. Islam and the Importance of Justice

Islam places great emphasis on establishing justice in all aspects of life. The emphasis on justice in Islam reflects its importance for a functioning society and the well-being of its members. Muslims are called upon to uphold justice in their dealings with others and within the legal system.

Justice as a Core Principle:

The Quran mentions justice frequently, establishing it as a foundational principle for a good society

"Verily, Allah enjoins justice, and the doing of good, and the giving to kinfolk, and forbids indecency and evil and wrong-doing; He admonishes you that you may take heed"

(Al-Nahl 90)

Justice for All:

The Quran emphasizes justice for everyone, regardless of background

"O you who believe! Be upright for justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin"

(An-Nisa 135)

Justice in leadership:

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) repeatedly emphasized justice. A famous Hadith says:

"Let the ruler be just himself before he enforces justice on others"

(narrated by Ibn Hibban).

Equality Before the Law:

Another Hadith states:

"People are equal before Allah, the most honorable of you with Allah is the one who most fears Allah"

(Sahih al-Bukhari)

Importance of Justice:

- Social Order and Stability
- Fulfilling Allah's Will
- Maintaining Balance:

17. Islam and Love for One Nation

While Islam emphasizes the unity of humankind under God, the concept of promoting love for one specific nation isn't central to Islamic teachings. The Quran and Hadith actually promote a broader sense of brotherhood and respect for all humanity.

Universal Brotherhood:

Islam emphasizes the concept of "Ummah," a global community of believers. The Quran states:

"O humanity! We have created you from a single male and female, and made you into nations and tribes that you may know each other. Indeed, the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is the most fearing of Him."

(Quran 49:13)

Equality of Races and Nations:

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) emphasized equality in his teachings. He said:

"All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab, and a white has no superiority over a black, or a black has no superiority over a white except by piety."

(Sahih al-Bukhari)

Respect for People of the Book:

Islam recognizes Judaism and Christianity as Abrahamic religions and encourages peaceful coexistence:

"Say, 'O People of the Scripture, come to a word that is equal between us – that we will worship none but Allah and will associate nothing with Him, and that none of us will take others as lords besides Allah.' But if they turn away, then say, 'Bear witness that we are Muslims.'"

(Quran 3:64)

Love for the Prophet's Community (Medina):

The Prophet established a strong community in Medina, and the Quran acknowledges their importance:

"And the first forerunners from the Muhajireen and the Ansar and those who followed them in good deed – Allah is well-pleased with them and they are well-pleased with Him, He has

prepared for them Gardens under which rivers flow, to dwell therein forever. That is the great attainment."

(Quran 9:100)

18.How Islam Promotes Morality: A Guiding Light

Islam places great emphasis on moral conduct, offering a framework for living a good and righteous life. This emphasis stems from the belief in pleasing Allah (God) and achieving success in the afterlife. The Quran, the holy book of Islam, serves as the primary source of moral guidance. It lays out numerous commandments and prohibitions that define right and wrong behavior.

"Indeed, We have sent you [O Muhammad] as a witness and a bearer of good news and a Warner, And to order justice among the people by your permission. And We have brought down to you, [O Muhammad], the Scripture with truth, confirming what was before it and superseding it. So judge between them by what Allah has revealed, and do not follow their desires if they deviate from what has come to you."

(Quran 2:143-144)

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is considered the perfect role model for Muslims. His life and teachings (Hadith) exemplify Islamic morality in action.

"The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, 'The best of you are those who have the most excellent character.'"

(Sahih al-Bukhari)

Core Moral Values:

Islam promotes a set of core values that guide behavior. These include:

- Honesty and Truthfulness.
- Justice and Fairness: Treating everyone justly, regardless of background.
- Kindness and Compassion: Helping those in need and showing empathy.
- Respect: For oneself, others, parents, elders, and those in authority.
- Charity and Generosity: Giving to the less fortunate and supporting good causes.
- Forgiveness: The importance of pardoning others and letting go of resentment.

19. Islam and the concept of Non-Exclusivity & Community

Islam emphasizes inclusivity and the importance of community, in Islam Mosque works as community centers. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

"The believers in their mutual love, mercy, and compassion are like one body. When one part of the body suffers, the whole body responds with fever and pain."

(Sahih al-Bukhari)

In Quran Allah mentions,

"And We have not sent you except as a mercy to the worlds."

(22: 78)

"And worship Allah and associate nothing with Him, and be good to parents and relatives and orphans and the needy and the neighbor near and the neighbor far, and the companion and the traveler and those whom your right hands possess. Indeed, Allah does not like those who are arrogant and self-conceited."

(2:186)

Islamic Principles Promoting Freedom

Islam emphasizes freedom in various aspects of life.

Freedom of Belief:

"There is no compulsion in religion"

(Quran 2:256).

This emphasizes the individual's right to choose their faith freely.

Freedom of Thought and Expression:

"You [Prophet Muhammad] do not guide those who are blind [i.e., to the truth]"

(Quran 20:108).

This implies freedom of reason and questioning for reaching understanding.

Freedom of Conscience:

"Let there be no compulsion in religion, for the right course has become clear from the wrong"

(Quran 2:256).

Islam respects individual conscience and avoids imposing beliefs.

Equality and Justice:

“O mankind, indeed We have created you from a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes that you may know each other. Indeed, the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you”

(Quran 49:13).

Islam promotes equality before God based on character, not race or social status.

Accountability for Actions:

“Every soul is a pledge for its [own] deeds. And indeed, to Allah will be their return”

(Quran 78:37-38).

Everyone is responsible for their choices and will be judged accordingly.