

Rights of the Islamic Society

Merits of the Islamic Society

Because of its remarkable qualities, the Islamic society, in the reign of its prosperity, was nonesuch and ideal among the international civilized nations. Its individuals composed one compact family of virtues and dignities.

It has been a nonesuch example of belief that included secrets of monotheism, showed true traits of divinity, declared the reality of prophesy, and explained the dimensions of the Judgment. Hence, it has become the divinely selected religion:

“No religion other than Islam (submission to the will of Allah) will be accepted from anyone. Whoever follows a religion other than Islam will be lost on the Day of Judgment. (3:85)”

It has been a nonesuch example of the enactment of laws, because the Islamic Sharia has been the comprehensive among the other divine codes and has been the most ideal constitution to humankind.

It has been a nonesuch example of moralities. The ethical values have been perfect and prosperous only during the reign of the Islamic society that is described by the Prophet’s words:

“The true believer is only he whom Muslims can trust in regard with their estates and souls. The true Muslim is only he whom Muslims are saved from his hand physical harm- and tongue- verbal harm-. The true Muhajir¹ emigrant- is that who deserts the sins².”

It has been a nonesuch example of social moralities. Amirul-Mu’minin said: “O my child, make yourself the measure (for dealings) between you and others.

Thus, you should desire for others what you desire for yourself and hate for others what you hate for yourself. Do not oppress as you do not like to be oppressed. Do good to others as you would like good to be done to you. Regard bad for yourself whatever you regard bad for others. Accept that (treatment) from others, which you would like others to accept from you. Do not talk about what you do not know

even though what you know be very little. Do not say to others what you do not like to be said to you³.”

Islam has been a nonesuch example of fraternity. It has declared the principle of fraternity among its individuals in such an unprecedented way:

“Believers are each other’s brothers. (49: 10)”

Accordingly, the Islamic society has become one family applying fraternal terms with each other. That was surely the greatest reformative conquest of Islam.

Islam has been also a nonesuch example of liberality and solidarity. Muslim individual must take interests in the social affairs and benefits and must look kindly at the miserable.

The Prophet (S) said: “He that begins a day without taking an interest in the affairs of the Muslims is not one of them⁴.”

“The creatures are subjects of Allah; therefore, the most favorable in the sight of Allah are those who best benefit His subjects and please His household⁵.”

Rights of the Islamic Society

Individuals are the bricks of society whose happiness is achieved when they are pleased and granted their social rights. In the same way, social depression occurs when they are depressed and deprived of their rights:

1. Right of Life

In the sight of Islam, right of life is natural and sacred and it is obligatory to be guarded. Violence of this right is a big crime the punishment of which is immortal abiding in Hell:

“The punishment for one who purposely slays a believer will be to live in hell fire forever. (4:93)”

Not only has Islam settled for the immortal abiding in Hell as punishment for murderers, but also has enacted the retaliation for murder and the undergoing of blood money for unintentional killing so as to guard Muslims’ souls and stop crimes of homicide:

“People of understanding, the law of the death penalty as retaliation grants you life so that perhaps you will have fear of Allah. (2: 179)”

Moreover, man is not permitted to put an end to his own life by committing suicide. He must protect and guard his soul against dangers and harms:

“Do not push yourselves into perdition. (2: 195)”

In the field of sacredness of souls, Islam has reached the climax when it forbade killing the fetuses by abortion and imposed on those who commit such crimes to undergo the identified blood money.

2. Right of Dignity

God has honored the faithful believer and covered him with colors of respect and support. He therefore has respected the believer's dignity, guarded his honor, forbidden any sort of violence to his property or soul, guaranteed his right, conferred upon him with favors, and declared His divine care for him in this life as well as the life to come:

“To those who have said, "Allah is our Lord," and who have remained steadfast to their belief, the angels will descend saying, "Do not be afraid or grieved. Receive the glad news of the Paradise which was promised to you. We are your guardians in this world and in the life to come, where you will have whatever you call for, a hospitable welcome from the All-forgiving and All-merciful Allah" (41:30-2).

“Those who have faith and fear Allah will receive glad news both in this life and in the life hereafter. (10:64)”

“We shall help Our Messengers and the believers, in this life and on the day when witness will come forward. (40:51)”

For cleaning the society from factors of divergence and dispersing the concepts of dignity among its individuals, Islam has forbidden any matter that may humiliate the believer, such as backbiting, spying, and sarcasm.

“Believers, stay away from conjecture; acting upon some conjecture may lead to sin. Do not spy on one another or backbite. Would any of you like to eat the disgusting dead flesh of your brother? Have fear of Allah; Allah accepts repentance and is All-merciful. (49:12)”

“Believers, let not a group of you mock another. Perhaps they are better than you. Let not women mock each other; perhaps one is better than the other. Let not one of you find faults in another nor let anyone of you defame another. How terrible is the defamation after having true faith. Those who do not repent are certainly unjust. (49:11)”

Moreover, Islam has guarded the believer's reputation in his life and after his death in the same standard. Hence, it is obligatory upon Muslims to hold the funeral rites of the dead Muslims and it is forbidden to do any matter that may dishonor even the dead body of Muslim. It has also enacted the law of the doctrinal provisions and blood money so as to guard the believers' souls, properties, and honors.

“People of understanding, the law of the death penalty as retaliation grants you life so that perhaps you will have fear of Allah. (2:179)”

“The only proper recompense for those who fight against Allah and His Messenger and try to spread evil in the land is to be killed, crucified, or either to have one of their hands and feet cut from the opposite side or to be sent into exile. These are to disgrace them in this life and they will suffer a great torment in the life hereafter. (5:33)”

Because fornicators despise the sacred honors of people and violate their dignities, Islam has enacted a severe punishment for them:

“Flog the fornicatress and the fornicator with a hundred lashes each. Let there be no reluctance in enforcing the laws of Allah, if you have faith in Allah and the Day of Judgment. Let it take place in the presence of a group of believers (24:2).”

To stop crimes of larceny that disturb peace, Islam has decided a strict provision for the thieves:

“Cut off the hands of a male or female thief as a punishment for their deed and a lesson for them from Allah. Allah is Majestic and All-wise. (5:38)”

In the same manner, the Ahlul-Bayt (a) declared the honor of the believer:

The Prophet (S) said: “To revile at the believers is defection, to fight them is atheism, to backbite them is act of disobedience to Allah, and their wealth is as sacred as their blood (soul)[6](#).”

“Allah said: He who dishonors one of My disciples is waging war against Me. The best thing through which My servant seeks nearness to Me is performing that which I have imposed on him. The servant may seek nearness to Me through performing a supererogatory prayer, and I will love him for so. If I love him, I will act as his hearing, sight, tongue, and hand. I will certainly respond to him when he calls upon Me, and I will certainly give him when he asks from Me. The most difficult thing for Me is grasping the soul of My believing servant who hates death and I hate injuring him[7](#).”

“Oh you who declared being Muslims by tongues but did not have sincere faith in hearts! Do not dispraise Muslims and do not inspect their flaws, for Allah will surely inspect the defects of those who inspect the flaws of Muslims, and will dishonor them even if they are in their own houses[8](#).”

“He who publicizes an ill matter is regarded as him who originated it, and whoever disregards a faithful believer for a matter will not die before that very matter sticks to him[9](#).”

3. Right of Freedom

Freedom stands for man’s manumission from slavery and enjoyment of his legal rights. It is the most sacred right of humankind; therefore, Islam has declared and decided protecting and spreading this right in the Islamic society.

Unlike the idea of the simple-minded, freedom does not mean release from all regulations that

contribute in systematizing, reforming, and protecting the societies. This sort of freedom is the freedom of jungles. The true freedom is to enjoy all the legal rights that are not in violation of others' rights:

A. Freedom of Religion

It is rightful for a Muslim to have full freedom in matters relating to his beliefs, rituals, and rulings of Sharia. It is illicit to coerce him to desert or act violently towards the constitution of Islam since such coercion is regarded as flagrant violence to the most sacred freedoms. Muslims, however, are required to be steadfast in matters relating to the belief and against the misleading campaigns aimed at deceiving them.

B. Civil Freedom

It is rightful for a Muslim to enjoy latitude and practice all his civil affairs. Hence, it is rightful to reside in any country he chooses, do any job he prefers, study any field of science he likes, and make any contract he wants. Hence, he is free to do all these things in the light of the Islamic Sharia.

C. Freedom of Propagation of Islam

This freedom is dedicated to the well-qualified Muslims who are able to publicize the Islamic edification. Such efforts contribute in developing the Islamic society doctrinally, culturally, and socially, and help in purifying it from vices.

“Let there be a group among you who will invite others to do good deeds, command them to obey the Law, and prohibit them from committing sins. These people will have eternal happiness. (3: 104)”

The Prophet (S) said: “People will live in perpetual goodness so long as they enjoin good, forbid evil, and cooperate on charity. If they stop acting these deeds, blessings will be taken away from them, some of them will rule the others tyrannically, and they will not find any supporter in the earth or in the heavens¹⁰.”

4. Right of Equality

Selfishness and class privileges prevailed on the life of the past nations. Class differentiation was the most distinctive feature in the lives of the Arabs in the pre-Islamic era. They used to persecute the weak and treat them as slaves and used not to criticize the celebrities for offenses so as to make distinction between ordinary people and them.

Omar Ibn Hind; the Arab king, for instance, used to talk to people from behind a screen and used to oblige mothers of the chiefs to act as servants in his house.

Annu'man Ibn al-Munthir was another example. He classified his days into days of pleasure and days of

rage. He used to endow anyone who meets him on a day of pleasure liberally, and kill every one who visits him on the days of rage.

Until the French Revolution; 1789, which called to and aroused egalitarianism in the mentalities of the Western people, racial discrimination was a common feature in the Western nations. Casteism, however, have lived in the mentalities of most of them. The German Nazi movement, for instance, has preferred the Aryan to others. In the American society, struggles between the white and the black are still current because of the selfishness of the white who disdain associating with the black. Britain, likewise, sowed the seeds of casteism in South Africa where the white are masters and the black are acting as slaves. In the shadows of communism that claims eradication of casteism, the distinction between social classes is clearly noticed.

Equality in Islam

Islam has enacted the principle of equality in a nonesuch method. All individuals of the society, whether male or female, white or black, Arabs or non-Arabs, celebrities or ordinary, or rich or poor are the same, just like the teeth of a comb. The one and only measurement of preference is God-fearing and righteous deed:

“O People, We have created you all male and female and have made you nations and tribes so that you would recognize each other. The most honorable among you in the sight of Allah is the most pious of you. Allah is All-knowing and All-aware. (49: 13)”

All are subject to the Islamic laws and duties, without any distinction.

The Prophet (S) kept on confirming on the principle of equality so as to achieve the noble fraternity among Muslims:

“Believers are each other’s brothers. (49: 10)”

As kings used to claim their being preferred to others, God, in the holy Quran, teaches the Prophet (S) to declare his reality among people:

“Say: I am only a mortal like you but I have received revelation that there is only one Lord. (18: 110)”

Hence, the Prophet and his immaculate progeny were the ideal examples of the application and the call to the principle of equality.

The Prophet (S) said: “by way of Islam, Allah took away the arrogance and taking pride in ancestors that were followed in the pre-Islamic era. All people are (the offspring) of Adam who was created from dust. The honorable among them in the sight of Allah is the most pious of them¹¹.”

One day, Omar Ibn al-Khattab asked: "If the caliph notices a lady committing fornication, is his testimony regarded as sufficient for subjecting her to the doctrinal provision?"

Imam Ali (a) answered: "Just like other Muslims, his testimony will be refused and he will be subjected to the lashing that is decided as doctrinal provision of defamation if he does not bring four witnesses."

Jebb; the Western author, was astonished by the Islamic principle of equality. He therefore expressed his admiration in his book titled 'With Islam', saying that there is no single association can achieve the success that Islam has achieved in field of combining the disagreeing races of humankind under the principle of egalitarianism. If disputations of the West and the East are decided to be studied, it will be obligatory to depend upon Islam for solving them.

Having decided equality, Islam has used such a logic style befitting reason and sound nature and corresponding to immortal principles of justice and giving equal opportunities to everybody. Hence, the standard of distinction has been a matter that is within everybody's capacity:

"The most honorable among you in the sight of Allah is the most pious of you. (49: 13)"

Meanwhile, Islam has decided distinction according to one's values and worthiness:

"Say: Are those who know equal to those who do not know? (39:9)"

On this standard, too, God made a distinction between the prophets, each according to his efforts:

"We gave some of Our Messengers preference over others. To some of them Allah spoke and He raised the rank of some others. We gave authoritative proofs to Jesus, son of Mary, and supported him by the Holy Spirit. (2:253)"

In the same manner, scholars were given preference to the ignorant and the believers to each other according to standings of knowledge, piety, and uprightness:

"Allah raises the position of the believers and of those who have received knowledge. (58: 11)"

People, in fields of sustenance, are preferred to each other, according to abilities and qualifications, because it is not fair to put the intelligent and the idiot on the same level:

"It is We who have distributed their sustenance in this world and raised the positions of some of them above the others so that they would mock each other. The mercy of your Lord is better than what they can amass. (43:32)"

5. Right of Knowledge

In his capacity as a member of the society, an individual has his own value and influence. According to the abilities and physical and mental qualifications of individuals, degrees of development and civilization

of societies are estimated. From this cause, the civilized nations exerted remarkable efforts for educating their sons by various means, such as compulsory education and free education in the first stages of schools.

In their golden age, Muslims were the ideal examples of spreading knowledge and honoring the knowledgeable. Hence, they held the reins of knowledge, constructed the Islamic civilization, and led the other nations to progress and development.

In his book titled 'History of the Arabs', Sdeu says that Muslims, in the Middle Ages, stood alone in the fields of knowledge, philosophy, and arts, and publicized them wherever they stepped. Therefore, these fields of knowledge reached Europe and caused its renaissance and development.

In the Islamic society, the right of education was available and secured for every individual, apart from race or social class. This was the main reason beyond the prosperity and extensive scope of the Islamic knowledge. The Islamic Sharia has ordained the scholars to publicize their knowledge among Muslims in the same way as it has ordained every male and female Muslim individual to seek knowledge.

6. Right of Ownership

The most seditious ordeal all over history is the ordeal of property and ownership that has been originated in this age and caused the world to divide into two disagreeing parties: one allows the private capital unconditionally (namely, the capitalists), and the other forbids it totally (namely, the communists).

Islam has settled this problem and treated it so wisely. It neither forbids private capital nor allows it unconditionally. Because man is naturally disposed to love possession and self-benefit, though the imaginary theories that do not believe in man's natural instincts and tendencies ignore this, Islam does not prevent the private capital, which is a natural right achieving the individuals' dignities and existence and frees them from authorities that control people's sustenance. The private capital, too, causes talents of man to blow up and encourages him to increase his productive energies.

Meanwhile, Islam, unlike modern capitalism, has not permitted the private capital unconditionally. It has defined definite legal ways for gaining wealth so that it will not be collected by a small group of people, while the majority whose efforts are exploited by the capitalists, are deprived of it:

Islam has identified certain ways for gaining wealth and forbidden other ways, such as usury, bribe, monopoly, or usurpation.

Islam has enacted the law of inheritance so as to distribute the wealth on a number of heirs of every generation.

Islam has ordained the taxes, such as the zakat, khums, and expiations, which are collected for securing good livelihood for the needy.

Through such economic principles, Islam has been able to sow the spirits of mutual sympathy and achieve social justice among Muslims.

7. Right of Islamic Interests

Mutual sympathy, fraternal ties, and harmony are the distinctive features of the Islamic society. According to Sharia, Muslims have no right to overlook the social affairs and to avoid participating in the social prosperity and development.

Showing their high ranks in the sight of Islam, the Ahlul-Bayt (a), through their numerous commandments that achieve social and economic perfection if they are applied, urged to respect and settle all the needs of the believing individuals:

A. Feeding and Watering the Believer

The Prophet (S) said: “As for anyone who serves a believer with water, although he can obtain it, Allah will give him seventy thousand merits for each drink. As for anyone who serves water to a believer who cannot obtain water, Allah will give him the reward of the one who manumitted ten individuals from the offspring of Ishmael the prophet¹².”

Imam as-Sajjad (a) said: “As for him who feeds a hungry believer, Allah will feed him from the fruits of Paradise, and as for him who waters a thirsty believer, Allah will water him from the Sealed Pure Drink¹³.”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “As for him who feeds a believer to satiation, Allah will reward him, in the Hereafter, in such a way that none of His creatures, including the angels and the prophets, can estimate it. To feed the hungry Muslim achieves the forgiveness of Allah. Listen to Allah’s saying: (It is the setting free of a slave or, in a day of famine, the feeding of an orphaned relative and downtrodden destitute person.)¹⁴”

B. Clothing the Believer

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “As for anyone who provides the winter or summer clothing to his friend, Allah will, incumbently, clothe him with the dress of Paradise, alleviate his agonies of death, and enlarge his grave. Moreover, the angels will receive him, as soon as he is resurrected, with glad news. This is the meaning of Allah’s saying: (The angels will come to them with this glad news:

“This is your day which was promised to you.” 21: 103¹⁵”

“As for anyone who provides clothing, or supports by any means, to a needy Muslim, Allah will appoint seven thousand angels for seeking forgiveness for him up to the day on which the Trumpet will be blown¹⁶.”

C. Settling the Believers Need

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said “For anyone who settles the need of his believing brother, Allah, on the Day of Resurrection, will settle for him one hundred thousand needs the easiest of which is that he, as well as his believing family members, relatives, and friends, will be taken to Paradise.¹⁷”

“Any Muslim individual who settles a need for a Muslim will be called by Allah, ‘I am responsible for your reward, and I will not give you anything less than Paradise¹⁸.’”

“On the day of Resurrection, a man will be lead by an angel to Hell. In his way, he passes by a believing individual whom he knew in the worldly life and asks him for help since he used to do him favors and settle his needs in the worldly affairs. The believer then asks the angel to release that man. As Allah hears the believer’s order, He orders the angel to release that man¹⁹.”

D. Gladdening the Believer

The Prophet (S) said: “The most favorable deed in the sight of Allah is gladdening the believers²⁰.”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “For anyone who gives pleasure to a believer, Allah will create a being from that pleasure to meet him at his death and bear to him the glad tidings of winning Allah’s honor and satisfaction. That being will accompany him in his grave and repeat the same glad tidings. When he will be resurrected, that being will accompany him and repeat the same glad tidings. With every horror that he has to encounter, that being will accompany him to repeat the same glad tidings. Hence, he will ask, ‘who are you?’ That being will answer, ‘I am the pleasure that you gave to so-and-so²¹.’”

E. Visiting the Believer

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “For anyone who visits his ill or healthy friend purely for the sake of Allah, without being cheating him, Allah will appoint seventy thousand angels calling him from behind, ‘Blessed be you. Enjoy Paradise. You are surely the visitor and the delegation of Allah the All- beneficent²².’”

“Hajjis and performers of Umrah are the delegations to Allah until they are back home. The performers of prayers are in the guardianship of Allah until they finish. Those who visit their believing friends are visiting Allah. Hence, they enjoy the rewards and favors of Allah.”

¹. Muhajirs: The emigrants. The early Muslims of Mecca who had to flee their homeland to Medina.

². Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 99 (as quoted from al-Kafi).

³. Quoted from Nahj ul-Balagha: Imam Ali’s commandment for Imam al-Hasan.

⁴. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 99 (as quoted from al-Kafi).

⁵. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 99 (as quoted from al-Kafi).

⁶. Quoted from al-Wafi; 3/160 (as quoted from al-Kafi and al- Faqih).

⁷. Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar; part 1 page 41 (as quoted from al-Kafi).

⁸. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; Kitab ul-Ashara 177 (as quoted from al-Kafi).

⁹. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; Kitab ul-Ashara, 177 (as quoted from Thawab ul-A’mal and al-Mahassin).

- [10.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; 9/29 (as quoted from at-Tahtheeb).
- [11.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; 14 (quoted from the Prophet's commandment for Imam Ali).
- [12.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; 3/121 (as quoted from al-Kafi).
- [13.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; 3/120 (as quoted from al-Kafi).
- [14.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; 3/120 (as quoted from al-Kafi).
- [15.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; 3/121 (as quoted from al-Kafi).
- [16.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; 3/121 (as quoted from al-Kafi).
- [17.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; 3/117 (as quoted from al-Kafi).
- [18.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; 3/117 (as quoted from al-Kafi).
- [19.](#) Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; Kitab ul-Ashara; 86 (as quoted from Thawab ul-A'mal).
- [20.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; 3/117 (as quoted from al-Kafi).
- [21.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; 3/117 (as quoted from al-Kafi).
- [22.](#) Quoted from al-Wafi; 3/117 (as quoted from al-Kafi).

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