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ALLAMA IQBAL OPEN UNIVERSITY, ISLAMABAD

Course: Social System of Islam (1909) • Level: BS (Islamic Studies, English Version)

Semester: Autumn 2026

Assignment No. 1 (Units: 1–4)

Total Marks: 100 • Pass Marks: 50

SOLVED ASSIGNMENT GUIDE

(For Study & Reference)

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Note: This guide is prepared for study and reference purposes. Students are advised to read the relevant units of the course book, understand the concepts, and then write the assignment in their own words.

Question 1: The Basic Values of Islamic Society (20 Marks)

Explain the basic values of Islamic society.

Introduction

Every society rests on a set of basic values — the shared beliefs about what is right, good and important that hold people together and guide their conduct. A society's values decide how its members treat one another, how wealth and power are used, how disputes are settled and what kind of human being the society tries to produce. Islamic society is not built on race, language, territory or material interest; it is built on the values revealed in the Holy Quran and

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practised by the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him). These values flow from the central belief of Tawhid, the Oneness of Allah, and they cover the whole of life: worship, family, trade, justice, politics and social relations. Because the values come from revelation rather than from changing human opinion, they are stable and universal, yet they leave room for the practical needs of every age. This answer explains the principal basic values of Islamic society — Tawhid, justice, equality, brotherhood, compassion, honesty, human dignity, consultation, social welfare and accountability — and shows how together they give Islamic society its distinctive character.

Tawhid: The Foundation of All Values

Tawhid, the belief that Allah is One, the Creator and Sovereign of the universe and the only object of worship, is the foundation on which every other Islamic value stands. It means that all human beings are creatures of the same God, so no person, class, race or ruler can claim divine status or absolute obedience. Obedience to rulers, parents and employers is real but limited: it ends where the command of Allah begins. Tawhid also unifies life itself. In Islamic society there is no wall between the 'religious' and the 'worldly'; trade, politics and family life are all part of one God-conscious existence, judged by one moral standard. This is why a Muslim trader's honesty, a judge's fairness and a ruler's humility are all expressions of the same belief. Tawhid further gives the believer an inner dignity and freedom: one who bows only before Allah cannot be enslaved in spirit by wealth, fashion, public opinion or tyrants. A society organised around Tawhid therefore possesses a single moral centre, and its values do not contradict one another, because they all issue from the same source.

Justice (Adl) and the Rule of Law

Justice is the value the Quran commands most insistently after Tawhid itself. Allah commands the believers to 'stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin' (Surah An-Nisa, 4:135), and warns them not to let hatred of any people prevent them from being just, 'for justice is nearest to piety' (Surah Al-Ma'idah, 5:8). Surah An-Nahl (16:90) joins justice (adl) with excellence in conduct (ihsan) in a verse recited in Friday sermons across the Muslim world. In Islamic society justice is not a favour granted by the strong; it is a right possessed by the weakest citizen, and it applies in the court, the market, the family and the state alike. The Prophet (peace be upon him) declared that nations before were destroyed because they punished the weak and spared the powerful who stole, and he swore that even if his own daughter Fatimah stole, her hand would be cut. Historically, this value produced the independent qadi (judge), the institution of hisbah (public accountability of markets and morals) and the right of an ordinary subject to complain against officials before the mazalim courts. A society that internalises justice gains trust, stability and legitimacy, because people obey laws they believe to be fair.

Equality and Human Dignity

Islamic society is founded on the equality of all human beings in origin and in moral worth. The Quran declares that mankind was created from a single pair, and divided into nations and tribes 'that you may know one another', adding that 'the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you' (Surah Al-Hujurat, 49:13). Worth is therefore measured by taqwa (God-consciousness and character), never by birth, colour, wealth or nationality. In his Farewell

Sermon the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated that no Arab has superiority over a non-Arab, and no white person over a black person, except by piety. Alongside equality stands the value of human dignity: 'We have honoured the children of Adam' (Surah Bani Isra'il, 17:70). Every human life is sacred — killing one innocent person is likened to killing all mankind (5:32) — and every person has inviolable rights to life, property, honour, privacy and belief. These two values together abolish caste, racism and hereditary privilege, and they explain why the early Islamic society could absorb Persians, Africans, Romans and Arabs into one community in which Bilal, an Abyssinian freed slave, became one of the most honoured Companions.

Brotherhood, Compassion and Social Solidarity

The Quran declares that 'the believers are but brothers' (49:10), and this brotherhood (ukhuwwah) is a working social value, not a slogan. The Prophet (peace be upon him) compared the believers to a single body: when one limb suffers, the whole body responds with fever and sleeplessness. Brotherhood creates mutual rights — visiting the sick, feeding the hungry, helping the debtor, defending the absent brother's honour — and it is supported by the value of compassion (rahmah). The Prophet described himself as sent 'only as a mercy to the worlds' (21:107), and mercy in Islamic society extends to parents, children, neighbours, the poor, orphans, travellers, animals and even the environment. Solidarity is institutionalised through Zakat, the obligatory transfer of wealth to the poor; through Sadaqah and Waqf (charitable endowment), which historically funded schools, hospitals, wells and hostels; and through the duty of enjoining good and forbidding evil (3:104, 3:110), which makes every member partly responsible for the moral health of the whole. The result is a society in which the individual is

never left entirely alone against misfortune, and in which wealth is expected to circulate rather than accumulate in a few hands (59:7).

Table 1: Basic values of Islamic society and their social effects

Value	Meaning in brief	Effect on society
Tawhid	Oneness and sovereignty of Allah	One moral standard for all of life; no human absolutism
Justice (Adl)	Giving everyone their due, without favour	Trust in courts and rulers; peace and stability
Equality	Equal worth of all human beings	End of racism, caste and hereditary privilege
Brotherhood	Believers bound as one family	Mutual help, unity and social security
Compassion	Mercy towards all creatures	Care for the weak, the poor and the orphan
Honesty (Sidq/Amanah)	Truthfulness and keeping trusts	Trust in trade, speech and public office
Shura	Consultation in collective affairs	Participation, restraint on rulers, better decisions
Accountability	Answerability to Allah and society	Self-discipline; less corruption and crime

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Honesty, Consultation, Moderation and Accountability

Several further values complete the picture. Honesty and trustworthiness (sidq and amanah) govern speech, trade and office: the truthful merchant is praised, cheating in measure is condemned in the strongest terms (83:1–3), and public office is a trust that must be given to those qualified for it (4:58). Consultation (shura) is the political value of Islamic society: the Prophet consulted his Companions, and the Quran praises those 'whose affairs are conducted by mutual consultation' (42:38) and commanded even the Prophet to consult (3:159). Moderation (wasatiyyah) is the community's temperament — the Quran calls the Muslims 'a middle nation' (2:143), avoiding both materialist greed and world-renouncing extremes in eating, spending, worship and judgement. Freedom exists but is responsible freedom, bounded by the rights of others and the commands of Allah. Finally, accountability (muhasabah) — the awareness that every deed will be questioned on the Day of Judgment — turns external rules into internal self-discipline, so that the values operate even when no policeman or camera is watching. Together with taqwa, the God-consciousness that animates them all, these values form a complete moral operating system for society.

Conclusion

To conclude, the basic values of Islamic society — Tawhid as its foundation, justice as its public law, equality and dignity as its social charter, brotherhood and compassion as its bonds, and honesty, consultation, moderation and accountability as its working habits — form one connected system rather than a list of separate virtues. Each value supports the others: Tawhid makes equality logical, brotherhood makes justice willingly accepted, and accountability makes

all of them durable. Wherever these values have been genuinely practised, Islamic society has produced security, learning and welfare; wherever they are neglected, the society weakens even if it keeps the Islamic name. The task of the Muslim community in every age, therefore, is not merely to admire these values but to embody them in families, markets, institutions and states.

Question 2: The Importance of the Holy Quran (20 Marks)

Describe the importance of the Holy Quran.

Introduction

The Holy Quran is the last and final revelation of Allah, sent down to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) through the angel Jibreel over a period of about twenty-three years, beginning in the cave of Hira in 610 CE and ending shortly before the Prophet's death in 632 CE. For Muslims it is not simply one holy book among others; it is the very speech of Allah (Kalam Allah), preserved exactly as it was revealed, and the supreme source of belief, law, morality and guidance. Its importance can be understood from several sides: its divine origin and preservation, its role as a complete code of guidance, its place as the first source of Islamic law, its spiritual and moral influence on the individual, its historical role in creating a civilisation, and its unique literary and miraculous character. The Quran describes its own purpose clearly: it is 'a guidance for mankind and clear proofs of guidance and the criterion (between right and wrong)' (Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:185). This answer describes each aspect of the Quran's importance in turn.

The Final Revelation and Its Preservation

The Quran is important, first, because of what it claims to be and how it has been preserved. Muslims believe it is the final revelation, completing and confirming the guidance given earlier to Prophets such as Musa (Moses), Dawud (David) and Isa (Jesus), peace be upon them, and correcting the distortions that had entered the earlier scriptures through human handling. Because it is the last revelation, no further book will come; hence Allah Himself undertook its protection: 'Indeed, We sent down the Reminder, and indeed We will guard it' (Surah Al-Hijr, 15:9). This protection has been achieved through a unique double system of transmission: the written text, compiled under Abu Bakr and standardised under Uthman (may Allah be pleased with them), and the memorised text carried by countless huffaz in every generation, recited in the five daily prayers and in Taraweeh. Manuscripts from the first Islamic century agree with the printed Quran of today, and a child memorising the Quran in Pakistan recites the identical words recited in Morocco or Indonesia. No other book in human history enjoys this combination of mass memorisation, continuous recitation and manuscript agreement, and this preservation is what allows the Quran to function as a permanent, unchanging reference point for the whole Ummah.

A Complete Guidance for Life

The Quran's second great importance is the comprehensiveness of its guidance. It calls itself an explanation of all things and 'a guidance and mercy' (16:89), and it addresses the whole of human existence. In belief, it teaches Tawhid, the attributes of Allah, prophethood, the revealed books, the angels and the Last Day. In worship, it commands prayer, fasting, Zakat and

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Hajj, which discipline the soul and society. In morality, it commands honesty, humility, patience, generosity, forgiveness and care for parents, and forbids lying, backbiting, pride, envy and waste. In social and economic life, it lays down principles of justice in trade, the sanctity of contracts, the prohibition of riba (interest) and gambling, the rights of inheritance of women and orphans, the rules of marriage and family life, and the obligation of consultation in public affairs. In the political sphere it fixes the principles of justice, accountability of rulers and obedience within the limits of Allah's law. The Quran mostly gives principles and foundational rules rather than a rigid code for every detail, which is precisely why it remains applicable to new circumstances: the Sunnah explains it in practice, and qualified scholarship derives rulings for new cases from its principles. It thus guides both the unchanging foundations and the changing applications of Muslim life.

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The First Source of Islamic Law and Unity of the Ummah

In the science of Islamic law (usul al-fiqh), the Quran is the first and highest source; the Sunnah is second and is itself understood in the Quran's light, for the Quran commands obedience to the Messenger (4:59, 59:7). Every legal school, whatever its later differences, begins from the Quran's verses on prayer, fasting, inheritance, marriage, penalties and transactions, and a ruling that contradicts a clear Quranic text is rejected by agreement of the scholars. The Quran is therefore the constitution above all constitutions for Muslim societies; historically, states from Madinah to the Ottoman era drew their legitimacy from it, and today the constitutions of Muslim countries such as Pakistan declare that no law shall be repugnant to the Quran and Sunnah. The Quran is also the strongest practical bond of the Ummah's unity. Muslims of every

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language recite the same Arabic text in prayer; the call to prayer, the Friday sermon and the month of Ramadan revolve around it; and it provides a shared vocabulary of values — adl, ihsan, taqwa, ummah — understood from Jakarta to Dakar. Movements of reform throughout Islamic history, in every century, have begun with a call to return to the Quran, which shows its continuing power as the standard by which the community judges itself.

Spiritual, Moral and Civilisational Influence

At the level of the individual soul, the Quran is recited as worship itself: its recitation is rewarded, its verses are the content of the daily prayers, and it is described as a healing and a mercy for the believers (17:82). Regular engagement with it produces God-consciousness, patience in hardship, gratitude in ease and hope of Allah's mercy; countless believers testify that its recitation brings a tranquility (sakinah) that no other reading gives. Morally, it reforms character from within, because the reader is constantly addressed by his Creator about his own deeds. At the civilisational level, the Quran's influence is enormous. Its command 'Read!' (96:1) and its praise of the pen launched a culture of learning; its questions about nature invited the study of astronomy, medicine, mathematics and geography in which Muslim scholars led the world for centuries; its Arabic became a world language of scholarship; and its calligraphy inspired the highest Islamic art, since the words themselves were treasured. Even the sciences of Arabic grammar, rhetoric and lexicography developed largely to serve the understanding of the Quran. A book that has shaped the daily worship, law, ethics, languages, arts and institutions of nearly two billion people can fairly be called the most influential book in the lives of its followers, and one of the most consequential books in human history.

Its Miraculous Character (I'jaz)

Muslims also hold the Quran to be a standing miracle. It challenged the eloquent Arabs of the Prophet's time to produce even one short chapter like it (2:23, 10:38), and the challenge remains unmet after fourteen centuries; its style is neither poetry nor ordinary prose, yet it moved hardened opponents to tears and conversion. Its internal consistency is part of the claim: revealed piecemeal over twenty-three years in changing circumstances, it contains no contradiction (4:82). It also contains statements about the natural world and past nations that its first audience could not have known unaided, and reports of past events presented as lessons. For the student, the practical point is simpler and does not depend on settling every apologetic claim: the Quran's inimitability, preservation and transforming power together explain why Muslims receive it not as a human book about God, but as the speech of God to human beings. This status gives its commands their authority and its promises their certainty in the believer's heart, and it is why the study of the Quran — its recitation (tilawah), memorisation (hifz), translation and commentary (tafsir) — remains the centre of Islamic education everywhere.

Conclusion

To conclude, the importance of the Holy Quran lies in the union of several qualities found together in no other book for its followers: it is the final revelation of Allah, miraculously preserved in text and memory; it is a complete guidance covering belief, worship, character, family, economy and state; it is the first source of Islamic law and the supreme criterion of right and wrong; it is the living bond of the worldwide Ummah; and it is a daily spiritual companion

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whose recitation is itself worship. To neglect the Quran is, for a Muslim, to neglect the very basis of his religion, while to study it, understand it and act upon it is the path to success in this world and the next — exactly as the Quran says of itself, that through it Allah guides 'those who seek His pleasure to the ways of peace' (5:16).

Question 3: The Importance of the Day of Judgment (20 Marks)

Write the importance of The Day of Judgment.

Introduction

Belief in the Day of Judgment (Yawm al-Qiyamah, also called Yawm al-Akhir, the Last Day) is one of the articles of faith in Islam. It is the belief that this world will end, that all human beings will be raised from their graves, gathered before Allah, and judged with perfect justice for what they did in their earthly lives, after which they will enter Paradise or Hell for eternity. The Quran returns to this theme again and again — by common scholarly observation, a very large share of its verses, especially in the Makki surahs, concern the Hereafter — and the Prophet (peace be upon him) constantly reminded his Companions of it. The importance of this belief is not limited to information about the future; it shapes how a believer lives in the present. This answer explains the importance of the Day of Judgment under several heads: its place in faith, the completion of divine justice, its powerful effect on morality and daily conduct, its comfort to the oppressed and warning to the oppressor, its answer to the question of life's purpose, and its social benefits.

A Pillar of Faith and the Purpose of Life

Belief in the Last Day stands in the Quran permanently joined to belief in Allah: 'whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day' is the repeated formula for the true believer, and the famous Hadith of Jibreel lists belief in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, the Last Day and divine decree as the definition of iman. The Day of Judgment gives human life its ultimate meaning. Without it, the world is a brief accident ending in nothing, and the questions that trouble every thoughtful person — why do the innocent suffer, why do the wicked prosper, why should I be good when goodness costs me? — have no answer. With it, life becomes a purposeful test: 'He who created death and life to test you as to which of you is best in deed' (Surah Al-Mulk, 67:2). Earthly life is the examination hall; the Day of Judgment is the day of results. This belief also completes the picture of Allah's attributes: the Merciful Creator who gave life, freedom and guidance is also Al-Malik (the King) of the Day of Recompense (1:4) and the most just of judges, who wrongs no one by even an atom's weight (4:40). A faith that proclaims God's justice but denied a final judgement would leave that justice unfulfilled, since it is plain that full requital does not happen in this world.

The Completion of Divine Justice

The strongest intellectual importance of the Day of Judgment is that on it, and only on it, justice becomes complete. In this world the murderer may escape the police, the corrupt official may die rich and honoured, the tyrant may never face a court, while the honest may suffer and die unknown. If death were the end, the moral accounts of history would remain forever unbalanced, and God's justice would appear incomplete. The Quran answers that a day is

appointed when the books will be opened and every soul will find present whatever it did, great or small (18:49); when records will be given in the right hand or the left (69:19–25); when witnesses, limbs and the very earth will testify (36:65, 99:7–8); and when even mutual wrongs between animals will be settled. 'Whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it' (99:7–8). Importantly, the wronged will be compensated even for wrongs done by fellow human beings, for on that day the rights of others (huquq al-ibad) must be settled before pardon, according to the Prophet's teaching about the truly bankrupt person who comes with prayers and fasts but having insulted, cheated and beaten others. The Day of Judgment is therefore the guarantee that no good deed is ever wasted and no injustice is ever finally successful — a guarantee no human legal system, however advanced, can offer, since human courts cannot reach the dead, the secret deed or the unrepentant heart.

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Its Effect on Morality and Daily Conduct

The practical importance of the belief shows itself most clearly in character and conduct. A person who is certain that he will stand before Allah and answer for his wealth (how he earned and spent it), his youth, his knowledge and his life, as the Prophet described, carries a policeman inside his own conscience. This is why the Quran so often joins moral commands to the reminder of the Last Day: the one who believes in Allah and the Last Day honours his guest and speaks good or keeps silent; the societies condemned in the Quran are marked precisely by denial of the Judgment — 'Have you seen the one who denies the Recompense? That is the one who repels the orphan and does not encourage the feeding of the poor' (107:1–3). Belief in the

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Day restrains crime where law cannot reach: the bribe taken in secret, the trust betrayed in private, the cruelty no one witnessed. It encourages long-term thinking, patience and self-control, because pleasures that cost the Hereafter are recognised as bad bargains. It also produces humility and God-consciousness in success, since the successful believer knows his blessings are a trust to be accounted for, not a proof of his own greatness. Societies formed by this belief historically produced endowments, honest markets and rulers who trembled at the thought of their subjects' complaints on that Day – Umar ibn al-Khattab famously feared being asked about a mule stumbling on an unrepaired road in Iraq.

Comfort to the Oppressed, Warning to the Oppressor, and Motive for Good

The Day of Judgment is also a message of hope and a source of psychological strength. For the oppressed, the poor, the patient sufferer and the martyr, it promises that suffering borne with faith is not meaningless and will be repaid beyond measure; the Quran repeatedly consoles the Prophet and the believers with the assurance that the Hereafter is better and more lasting (93:4, 87:17). This hope has sustained persecuted communities in every age, enabling endurance without surrender. For the powerful, the same belief is a warning: kings and beggars will stand in one row, wealth and armies will not avail (26:88–89), and intercession will occur only by Allah's permission. Few doctrines have ever restrained rulers as effectively as a ruler's own conviction that he will be questioned about his flock. At the same time the belief motivates positive action: charity given secretly, forgiveness offered to an enemy, prayers in the night, care for parents in their old age — deeds with no worldly audience or reward — are performed purely in expectation of that Day's reward. It thus supplies the strongest possible

motivation for doing good and the strongest possible deterrent against evil, operating in all places and at all times, unlike human incentives which operate only under observation.

Signs, Preparation and the Balance of Fear and Hope

The Quran and Sunnah describe major and minor signs preceding the Day — among the major signs traditionally listed are the appearance of the Dajjal, the return of Isa (Jesus), peace be upon him, the emergence of Ya'juj and Ma'juj (Gog and Magog), and the rising of the sun from the west — but the date itself is known to Allah alone (7:187, 31:34), and this very uncertainty is part of the belief's wisdom: the believer prepares at all times, like a traveller who does not know the hour of departure. Preparation consists of faith, righteous deeds, repentance (tawbah) before death, restoring the rights of others, and dying with a good opinion of Allah's mercy. The Quran maintains a deliberate balance between fear (khawf) of the Judgment and hope (raja') in Allah's mercy: fear without hope produces despair, which Islam forbids (39:53), while hope without fear produces carelessness. The believer therefore lives between the two, striving and trusting. It should also be noted that belief in the Day of Judgment is shared, in some form, by Judaism and Christianity, which underlines its centrality to the whole prophetic tradition: reward and punishment after death are not an Islamic innovation but the completion of the message of all the Prophets.

Conclusion

To conclude, the importance of the Day of Judgment can be summarised in one sentence: it is the belief that makes all the other beliefs of Islam practically effective. It completes the justice of Allah by guaranteeing that every deed, secret or open, will be weighed; it gives life a purpose

beyond the grave; it polices the conscience in private where no human law can reach; it comforts the oppressed, restrains the oppressor, and motivates unnoticed acts of goodness; and it holds the soul in the healthy balance of fear and hope. A society of people who truly believe they will be judged does not need to be watched in order to behave — and that is why the Quran mentions the Last Day on page after page, and why no understanding of the Islamic social system is complete without it.

Question 4: The Concept of Ummah in Muslim Society (20 Marks)

Write the concept of Ummah in the Muslim society.

Introduction

The word Ummah is one of the most important concepts in the Islamic view of society. In the Quran it is used in several senses — a community, a period of time, a religion or way, and even an exemplary leader, as Ibrahim (peace be upon him) is called an ummah by himself (16:120) — but its central social meaning is the worldwide community of the believers, united by faith in Allah and His final Messenger, transcending race, language, colour, nationality and territory. When the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) migrated to Madinah, he did not merely gather followers; he founded an Ummah, and the document known as the Charter of Madinah (Mithaq al-Madinah) described the believers as 'one Ummah, distinct from other people'. Fourteen centuries later, nearly two billion Muslims in almost every country still understand themselves as members of this single community. This answer explains the Quranic foundations of the concept, its defining characteristics, its historical formation, its rights and duties, and its condition and challenges in the modern world.

Quranic Foundations of the Ummah

The Quran lays the foundations of the Ummah in clear verses. 'And hold firmly together to the rope of Allah and do not be divided' (3:103) commands unity around revelation. 'Indeed this, your Ummah, is one Ummah, and I am your Lord, so worship Me' (21:92) makes the community's unity a direct consequence of the unity of God: one Lord, one guidance, one community. The Ummah is given an identity and a mission together: 'You are the best community produced for mankind: you enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah' (3:110), and it is called 'a middle (just) community' appointed as witnesses over mankind, with the Messenger as a witness over it (2:143). Its internal bond is specified as brotherhood: 'The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers' (49:10), and its mutual relations are described in Surah At-Taubah (9:71): the believing men and women are allies of one another who enjoin good, forbid evil, establish prayer, give Zakat and obey Allah and His Messenger. The Prophet (peace be upon him) embodied these verses in practice, joining the Muhajirun (emigrants from Makkah) and the Ansar (helpers of Madinah) in a formal brotherhood (mu'akhah) in which homes, wealth and even inheritance were initially shared — a bond based purely on faith, replacing the blood-ties that had organised Arabian society.

Defining Characteristics of the Ummah

Several characteristics distinguish the Ummah from other forms of human grouping. First, its basis is creed (aqidah), not blood or soil: a convert in Indonesia and a scholar in Egypt are members on exactly the same footing as a descendant of the Quraysh, because membership is

by belief and commitment, not by birth alone. This makes the Ummah the first large-scale community in history organised around an idea rather than an ethnicity. Second, it is universal and open: its message is addressed to all mankind, anyone may join it by accepting Islam, and it exists wherever its members live, whether they are a majority or a small minority. Third, it is a community of moderation and balance (wasatiyyah), avoiding extremes in religion and worldly life. Fourth, it has a moral mission: it is not formed merely for mutual defence or prosperity but to witness to the truth, command right and forbid wrong, and serve humanity. Fifth, its unity is real but not uniformity: differences of language, culture, dress, food and juristic opinion (within the agreed foundations) are accepted as natural diversity (49:13), while division into hostile sects and parties is condemned (6:159, 30:32). Sixth, its members owe one another tangible rights — the Prophet listed among them returning greetings, visiting the sick, following funerals, accepting invitations and praying for the one who sneezes — so that belonging is experienced in daily kindness, not only in declarations.

Table 1: The Ummah compared with other bases of community

Basis of grouping	Who is included	Source of loyalty	Islamic view
Tribe / race	Those of the same blood	Ancestry	Rejected as a basis of worth (49:13)
Nation-state	Citizens of one territory	The state and its laws	Respected for order, but not the highest loyalty
Economic class	Those of similar wealth	Material interest	Rejected; rich and poor

	or occupation		are brothers in faith
Ummah	All believers, everywhere	Faith in Allah and His Messenger	The Quranic ideal of one worldwide community

The Ummah in History: From Madinah to a World Community

Historically, the Ummah was formed in Madinah in 622 CE, when the Prophet united the Aws and Khazraj tribes — former enemies — with the emigrants from Makkah into one polity under one law. The Charter of Madinah is remarkable because it defined the community in writing, guaranteed the security of life and property, and also regulated relations with the Jewish tribes of the city as part of the wider political order. Under the rightly guided Caliphs the Ummah expanded rapidly, yet it absorbed Persians, Egyptians, Berbers, Turks, Indians and Africans without demanding that they cease to be themselves culturally; within a few centuries the majority of Muslims were not Arabs, and the centres of the Ummah's learning included Baghdad, Cordoba, Cairo, Samarkand and Delhi. Institutions expressed the unity in practice: the Hajj gathered the Ummah annually at one place in identical dress; Zakat and Waqf moved resources across regions; scholars travelled for knowledge (rihla) from Andalusia to Central Asia carrying the same books; and the Arabic Quran and the Sunnah provided a shared reference accepted everywhere. Political unity under one caliph did not always last, and after the early centuries the Ummah often lived under many states — an important lesson that the Ummah is

a community of faith and solidarity, which may exist within one state or across many, and is larger than any government.

Rights, Duties and Responsibilities within the Ummah

Membership of the Ummah creates reciprocal rights and duties. Individually, each Muslim owes the community sincerity, obedience to its legitimate collective decisions in what is right, and the duty of sincere advice (nasihah), which the Prophet made a definition of religion itself. Collectively, the Ummah owes its members protection of life, property and honour; relief in disaster, which is why Muslim communities worldwide respond to earthquakes and floods affecting fellow Muslims; and the preservation and transmission of the faith through education and family life. The duty of enjoining good and forbidding evil operates at every level — in the heart, by the tongue and by the hand, according to ability and authority — and it is what keeps the Ummah a moral community rather than a mere demographic statistic. The Ummah also has duties towards non-Muslims: to deal justly with those who do not fight it (60:8), to honour covenants, to protect the life and worship of non-Muslim citizens under its rule, and to present Islam by example and invitation (dawah) with wisdom (16:125). The Prophet's covenants with the Christians of Najran and the protected status historically given to churches and synagogues under Muslim rule show that the Ummah's unity was never meant to be built on injustice to others; its witness (2:143) depends on its fairness.

The Ummah Today: Challenges and Revival

In the modern world the Ummah faces serious challenges to its unity and mission. Political division into many states, sectarian conflict, ethnic nationalism, economic inequality between

Muslim countries, illiteracy and dependence on others for knowledge and technology, and extremist movements that excommunicate fellow Muslims (takfir) and spread violence, all weaken the community from within. Globalisation, however, also creates new opportunities: instant communication, shared media, Muslim minorities living in the West, international relief organisations and bodies such as the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) allow forms of coordination that earlier generations could not imagine. Scholars generally agree that revival (tajdid) begins not with slogans but with returning to the Quranic foundations: education that unites knowledge with character, justice within Muslim societies, respect for legitimate differences of opinion, economic cooperation and Zakat properly collected and distributed, and rejection of both extremism and heedlessness. The concept also guides Muslim minorities: they remain part of the Ummah spiritually and morally while being law-abiding citizens of their countries, contributing positively to the societies in which they live. In this way the fourteen-century-old concept continues to answer the modern search for an identity larger than the tribe and more humane than mere nationalism.

Conclusion

To conclude, the Ummah is the community created by faith: one community, under one God, guided by one Book and one Prophet, bound by brotherhood, charged with witnessing to truth and serving mankind. It differs from tribe, race and nation because its door is open to every human being and its bond survives every border. Its history — from the brotherhood of Madinah to a worldwide civilisation — shows what the concept can build, while its present divisions show the cost of forgetting it. For the student of the Islamic social system, the Ummah

is the frame within which all the other institutions of that system — family, mosque, market and state — find their meaning: they are the organs of one body, and the health of the whole depends on the faith, unity and moral seriousness of its members.

Question 5: The Role of Family in Islamic Society (20 Marks)

Explain the role of family in the Islamic Society.

Introduction

The family is the first and most fundamental institution of Islamic society. Before there is a school, a market or a state, there is a home in which a child learns language, faith, manners and trust; and Islam, which builds society from the individual outward, therefore gives the family a central place in its social system. The Quran presents the creation of spouses and the affection between them as one of the signs of Allah: 'And among His signs is that He created for you spouses from among yourselves, that you may find tranquillity in them, and He has put between you affection and mercy' (Surah Ar-Rum, 30:21). Marriage, in this view, is not merely a civil contract or a private arrangement of convenience; it is a solemn covenant (mithaq ghaliz, 4:21) with sacred purposes — tranquillity, love, the continuation of the human race, and the raising of righteous generations. This answer explains the role of the family in Islamic society under several heads: its place as the foundation of society, marriage as its basis, the rights and duties of spouses, the rights of parents and the upbringing of children, care of the wider kin and the elderly, its economic and social welfare functions, and the challenges facing the Muslim family today.

The Family as the Foundation of Society

Islam builds society like a building, and the family is its foundation stone. A society is, in the end, no better than the homes that compose it: honesty, patience, respect for elders, care for the weak and love of learning are either learned at home or learned with great difficulty elsewhere. The Quran traces the human community its heir to one family — 'O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women' (4:1) — so that the family is not an invention of custom but part of the created order. Because the family is the first school of the child, Islam surrounds its formation with guidance: the choice of a spouse is directed primarily to religion and character; the marriage is public and contractual, with the dower (mahr) as the wife's own right; and the home is expected to be a place of prayer, remembrance and kindness, not merely of eating and sleeping. The Prophet (peace be upon him) described each family member as a shepherd responsible for his flock, making the household a small society in which leadership means service and accountability. When families are stable, neighbourhoods are safe, schools can teach, and the state is relieved of burdens it cannot carry; when families break down, every other institution inherits the damage.

Rights and Duties of Husband and Wife

The Islamic family rests on the balanced rights and duties of the spouses. The Quran states the principle of reciprocity: women have rights similar to the rights upon them, according to what is reasonable (2:228). The husband is the maintainer and protector (qawwam) of the family (4:34), responsible for its financial support according to his means — even after divorce, in the

cases the law specifies — and this duty is a responsibility of service, not a licence for tyranny; the Prophet said that the best of men is the one who is best to his family, and he himself helped in the work of the house. The wife is the guardian of the home and the primary nurturer of the children, a role Islam honours so highly that Paradise is described as lying beneath the feet of mothers. Spouses are called garments for one another (2:187) — covering each other's faults, protecting and adorning each other — and their relationship is to be run by kindness (mu'asharah bil-ma'ruf, 4:19) and consultation. Disputes are to be resolved first within the home, then with arbiters from both families (4:35), and divorce, though permitted, is described as the most disliked of permitted things, hedged with waiting periods, reconciliation opportunities and financial safeguards. The legal details differ among the schools of law, but the shared purpose is constant: a home governed by justice, mercy and mutual respect, in which neither partner is the property or the enemy of the other.

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Rights of Parents and the Upbringing of Children

Within the family, the rights of parents hold the highest place after the rights of Allah. The Quran joins gratitude to parents directly to gratitude to God (31:14) and commands kind treatment of them even in extreme old age: 'Do not say to them so much as "uff", and do not repel them, but speak to them a noble word... and say: My Lord, have mercy upon them as they brought me up when I was small' (17:23–24). Obedience to parents is required in all that is lawful, and serving them is counted among the greatest deeds. In return, parents owe their children far more than food and clothing. Islamically, a child has the right to a good name, to nourishment and care, to education, to affection shown openly, to justice and equality among

siblings — the Prophet refused to witness a gift given to one child and not the others — and above all to tarbiyah: gradual moral and religious training in prayer, honesty, modesty and responsibility. 'O you who believe, protect yourselves and your families from a Fire' (66:6) makes upbringing a sacred duty. The mother and father are the child's first teachers, and their own example teaches more than their instructions. A family that fulfils this role produces citizens who are disciplined, compassionate and God-conscious before any state institution touches them, which is why Islam regards good parenting as an act of worship and a continuing charity (sadaqah jariyah) whose reward outlives the parents.

The Wider Kin, the Elderly and Social Welfare

The Islamic family is wider than the modern nuclear household. The Quran commands the keeping of kinship ties (silat al-rahim) in the very verse that commands the fear of Allah (4:1), and the Prophet warned that the one who severs the ties of kinship will not enter Paradise. Relatives have defined rights of inheritance, of maintenance in specified cases, of visiting, help and good treatment; the laws of inheritance in Surah An-Nisa distribute a person's estate among parents, spouses, children, siblings and, in their absence, remoter kin, so that wealth is spread through the family instead of concentrating in one heir. The elderly occupy a place of honour in this system: they remain within the family, cared for by children for whom caring is worship, rather than being isolated as a burden — a pattern whose human value becomes clearer as many wealthy societies struggle with loneliness and the cost of institutional elder care. The family is also Islam's first welfare system: the needy relative is the first charge on a person's charity, Zakat may be given to poor kin (other than those one must maintain), and

orphans are preferably raised within extended families, with strict Quranic protection of their property (4:2, 4:10). Family endowments (waqf ahli) historically extended this care across generations. In short, before the state spends anything, the Islamic family is already feeding, housing, educating and nursing its members — which is why its weakening immediately transfers enormous costs to society.

Moral, Social and Economic Functions of the Family

The family's roles can be summarised by their functions. Morally and spiritually, it is the channel through which faith passes from generation to generation: a child who sees prayer, honesty and generosity at home receives Islam as a lived reality. Socially, it socialises the individual, teaches him his first lessons in rights, duties, patience and cooperation, gives him identity and belonging, and connects him through kinship networks to a wider community that knows and supports him. Emotionally, it provides the tranquillity (sakinah), love (mawaddah) and mercy (rahmah) of Surah Ar-Rum, sheltering its members from the loneliness and anxiety of purely individualistic living; marriage in Islam is also the lawful channel for natural desires, protecting society from the disorder that follows their unregulated pursuit, and the Prophet encouraged marriage for the young as a guard of chastity and of the eyes. Economically, the family pools resources, maintains dependants without wages, cares for the sick and disabled, transmits skills and property, and in much of the Muslim world still operates farms, shops and trades as family enterprises. Demographically, it ensures the continuation and renewal of society itself. Politically, stable families produce the trust and discipline on which all larger institutions depend; classical Muslim thinkers such as Ibn Khaldun observed that social

solidarity (asabiyyah) begins in kinship and is refined by religion into the solidarity of the whole society.

Challenges Facing the Muslim Family Today

The contemporary Muslim family faces real pressures that a balanced answer should acknowledge: urbanisation and migration separate young couples from the extended family that once supported them; economic strain delays marriage and strains households; media and social media import models of individualism and consumption that conflict with family values; divorce rates are rising in many Muslim societies; and in some places harmful customs — denying girls education or inheritance, extravagant wedding expenses, or treating daughters-in-law unjustly — are wrongly practised in religion's name, though Islam itself condemns them. The Islamic response is neither to abandon the family ideal nor to romanticise the past, but to recover the Quranic balance: simplifying marriage, educating both spouses in their rights and duties, premarital and marital counselling, fair treatment of women and daughters, shared financial planning, protecting children from harmful media while using technology wisely, and reviving the supportive — without being oppressive — role of the extended family. Muslim minorities in the West face the additional task of raising confident children who belong both to their faith and to the societies they live in. In every setting, the principle is the same: the family is protected by practising the values Islam gave it — justice, mercy, consultation and God-consciousness — rather than by mere custom or force.

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Conclusion

To conclude, the family in Islamic society is not a private matter at the margin of the social system; it is the system's foundation, first school, first welfare office and first house of worship. Through marriage it creates a covenant of tranquillity, love and mercy; through the rights of spouses, parents, children and kin it distributes care and wealth justly; and through tarbiyah it manufactures, generation after generation, the honest and God-conscious human beings on whom every other Islamic institution depends. Societies that honour and support the family reap stability and compassion; those that let it disintegrate pay for the damage in crime, loneliness and welfare costs. Islam's teaching is therefore as practical as it is spiritual: protect the family, and the family will protect society.

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