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ALLAMA IQBAL OPEN UNIVERSITY, ISLAMABAD

Course: Political System of Islam (1907) • Level: BS (Islamic Studies, English Version)

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Assignment No. 2 (Units 5–9)

SOLVED ASSIGNMENT GUIDE

(For Study & Reference)

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. Total marks of the assignment are 100 (pass marks 50); each question carries the marks shown with it.

Question 1: Describe the Prophet's Teachings on Social Justice (20 Marks)

Describe the Prophet's Teachings on Social Justice.

Introduction

Social justice — the fair distribution of rights, duties, opportunities and burdens within a society, so that no class lives by crushing another — is not a decorative addition to the teaching of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him); it is one of the central purposes of his mission. The Quran describes the messengers as sent 'so that mankind may stand forth in justice' (57:25), and describes the Prophet himself as 'a mercy to the worlds' (21:107). In

seventh-century Arabia he found a society ordered by tribal pride, in which the strong devoured the weak, infant girls were buried alive, slaves were property without rights, women were inherited like goods, debts multiplied through usury until families were enslaved, and blood vengeance passed from generation to generation. Within twenty-three years, by teaching, by legislation and above all by personal example, he replaced that order with a community in which a caliph could be questioned by a Bedouin, a freed Abyssinian slave called the prayer from the roof of the Kaaba's sanctuary, and the ruler was commanded to judge between a Muslim notable and a Jewish citizen by evidence alone. This answer sets out the foundations of the Prophet's teaching on justice, its applications to equality, wealth, family, minorities and governance, and the institutions through which he made justice a social reality rather than a sermon.

Foundations: Justice as a Command of God

The Prophet's teaching begins with God Himself. Justice — 'adl — is an attribute of God, who 'stands firm for justice' (Quran 3:18) and wrongs no one. The Prophet (peace be upon him) related, in a sacred hadith (hadith qudsi) recorded by Muslim: 'O My servants, I have forbidden injustice for Myself and have made it forbidden among you, so do not wrong one another.' From this root the branches grow. The Quran commands: 'O you who believe, stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to God, even against yourselves or your parents or your kin, and whether it be against rich or poor' (4:135); 'Let not the hatred of a people prevent you from being just; be just — that is nearer to piety' (5:8); and in what the Prophet called the most comprehensive verse on social ethics, 'God commands justice, excellence (ihsan), and giving to

near relatives, and forbids indecency, wrong and transgression' (16:90) — a verse still recited in Friday sermons across the world. Justice in this teaching is not the policy of a party or the interest of a state; it is worship. The Prophet placed the just ruler at the head of the seven whom God will shade on the Day when there is no shade but His (Bukhari and Muslim), making social justice the highest form of devotion after faith itself.

Two features of this foundation deserve emphasis. First, justice is universal: it is owed to friend and enemy, Muslim and non-Muslim, rich and poor, because it is owed to God. When a funeral procession passed and the Prophet stood in respect, and was told the deceased was a Jew, he replied, 'Was he not a soul?' (Bukhari). Second, justice is comprehensive: it covers the courtroom but also the market, the family, the battlefield and the distribution of wealth, because the God who commands it sees all domains alike. The Prophet's teaching therefore produced not merely fair judges but a just society — a distinction the rest of this answer will trace.

Equality of Human Beings

The social order of Arabia rested on inequality of blood: tribe against tribe, Arab against non-Arab, free against slave, man against woman. The Prophet struck at the root. In his Farewell Sermon at Arafat (10 AH/632 CE), delivered before more than a hundred thousand companions, he declared: 'All mankind is from Adam and Eve. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor a non-Arab over an Arab; a white has no superiority over a black, nor a black over a white, except by piety and good action.' The Quran grounds this in creation: 'We created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another; indeed the

most noble of you in the sight of God is the most righteous of you' (49:13). Nobility was thereby transferred from ancestry to character — a revolutionary redefinition, since character is open to every human being while ancestry is open to none by choice.

He enacted what he preached. Bilal ibn Rabah, a freed Abyssinian slave who had been tortured for his faith, was appointed the first muezzin and stood on the roof of the Kaaba at the conquest of Makkah to call the prayer — a public enthronement of the once-despised at the holiest place in Islam. Zayd ibn Harithah, another freed slave, commanded armies containing the noblest Quraysh; his son Usama, still in his teens, was given command over senior companions, and when some murmured, the Prophet answered their objection publicly. Salim, the freed slave of Abu Hudhayfa, led the emigrants in prayer because he knew the Quran best. The criterion in each case was merit and piety, never birth. The Prophet also married across the lines of class and former slavery, and taught, 'Your slaves are your brothers whom God has placed under your hands; so feed them from what you eat, clothe them from what you wear, and do not burden them with work beyond their capacity' (Bukhari and Muslim) — transforming the master-slave relation into a brotherhood with enforceable duties, and making the freeing of slaves one of the most rewarded acts in Islam and the expiation for many sins.

Justice in Law and Judgement

Equality before the law was the Prophet's most dramatic public teaching on justice. When a woman of the noble tribe of Makhzum was convicted of theft and her people sent Usama ibn Zayd — beloved to the Prophet — to intercede for her, the Prophet's face changed colour and he said: 'Do you intercede in one of the limits set by God? By God, if Fatima, the daughter of

Muhammad, stole, I would cut off her hand.' He then explained that earlier nations were destroyed precisely because 'when the noble among them stole, they let him go, and when the weak stole, they applied the punishment' (Bukhari and Muslim). The principle is complete: no intercession, no influence, no rank suspends the law. He applied the same impartiality against his own community: in the case of the Jew accused over a stolen coat of armour, when the evidence pointed to the Muslim suspect's guilt the Quran itself intervened (4:105–112) commanding the Prophet not to plead for the treacherous even against a Jew — revelation correcting any temptation to communal favouritism.

He also built justice into procedure. He forbade a judge to decide while angry (Bukhari and Muslim), commanded that both parties be heard, placed the burden of proof on the claimant and the oath on the denier, prohibited bribes — cursing the one who gives and the one who takes them in matters of judgement (Tirmidhi) — and warned that a judge who knowingly renders an unjust decision has chosen his seat in the Fire. His own judgements modelled these rules: he accepted evidence over his personal knowledge, and when he decided a dispute he reminded the winner that if the decision had awarded him what was in fact his brother's right, he had been given 'a piece of the Fire' if he took it knowingly (Bukhari and Muslim) — a warning that ties courtroom justice directly to conscience and the hereafter.

Economic Justice and the Rights of Workers

The Prophet's social justice had a strong economic dimension, because he saw that political equality means little where wealth is hoarded and labour is cheated. God describes the desired circulation of wealth in the Quran: 'so that it may not merely circulate among the rich among

you' (59:7). The Prophet institutionalised that circulation through zakat — the obligatory annual levy on wealth, assigned by revelation to the poor, the indebted, the wayfarer and other specified heads (9:60) — through the prohibition of riba (interest), which in Arabia had doubled and redoubled debts until the debtor's family itself was seized, through strict honesty in trade, forbidding fraud, hoarding of foodstuffs, artificial bidding and the interception of caravans before they reached the market; and through the protection of the labourer. His instruction, 'Give the worker his wages before his sweat dries' (Ibn Majah), makes prompt payment a religious duty, and in a sacred hadith God declares Himself the opponent, on the Day of Resurrection, of 'a man who hires a worker, takes the full work from him, and does not pay him his wage' (Bukhari). He himself was the fairest of employers: Anas ibn Malik served him for ten years and reported that he never once said 'uff' to him, nor asked 'why did you do this?' or 'why did you not do that?' (Bukhari and Muslim).

Justice within the Family and towards Women and the Weak

A society's justice is tested at home, where the powerful face the powerless without witnesses. The Prophet taught that authority within the family is a trust carrying accountability: 'Each of you is a shepherd, and each of you is responsible for his flock' (Bukhari and Muslim). He abolished the burial of infant daughters, declaring that whoever raises daughters kindly will be shielded by them from the Fire (Bukhari and Muslim); he gave women their own property, inheritance and dower, which pre-Islamic custom had denied them; and he made kindness the measure of manhood: 'The best of you is the one who is best to his family, and I am the best of you to my family' (Tirmidhi). He commanded justice even in affection among children —

refusing to witness a father's gift to one son unless the others received the like, saying, 'Fear God and be just between your children' (Bukhari and Muslim). Towards the weak generally — orphans, widows, the elderly, the disabled, the poor — his teaching converted charity from a favour into a right, and his practice converted rights into institutions, as later answers in this assignment examine in detail.

Justice towards Non-Muslims and in War

The Prophet's justice crossed the boundary of faith. The Charter of Madinah, drawn up on his arrival in 622 CE, constituted the city's Muslims, Jews and pagans into one political community (umma) for mutual defence, guaranteed each group its religion and property, and prescribed common rules of justice — arguably history's earliest written constitution of a plural city. His covenants with the Christians of Najran protected their churches, clergy and property. His standing orders were uncompromising: 'Whoever wrongs a person under covenant, or diminishes his right, or burdens him beyond his capacity, or takes anything from him without his consent — I shall be his opponent on the Day of Resurrection' (Abu Dawud); and 'Whoever kills a person under covenant shall not smell the fragrance of Paradise' (Bukhari). Even in war — the severest test — he forbade the killing of women, children, the elderly, monks and hired labourers, the mutilation of the dead, the destruction of crops and trees and the killing of animals except for food; and he freed prisoners, ransomed them, or set them to teach Muslim children to read as their ransom after Badr, joining mercy to justice even towards defeated enemies.

Making Justice Real: Example and Institutions

Teachings change societies only when embodied. The Prophet lived in a house of mud bricks, mended his own clothes, sat on the ground eating what his servants ate, and died with his armour pawned to a Jewish merchant for barley for his family — although the revenues of Arabia passed through his hands. When his son Ibrahim died, an eclipse occurred and people called it a sign; he corrected them publicly, refusing a supernatural privilege that cost him nothing to accept. This personal justice made his public justice credible. Institutionally, he established the mosque as a community centre where grievances were heard; appointed judges (Mu'adh to Yemen, with the famous instruction to judge by the Quran, then the Sunnah, then his own reasoned judgement); created the public treasury (bayt al-mal) with rules for distribution in which the earliest and neediest were served first; and made the giving of sincere advice and the speaking of truth before a tyrant — 'the most excellent jihad is a word of truth before an unjust ruler' (Abu Dawud, Tirmidhi) — duties of every believer, planting the seed of accountability that his successors were commanded to preserve.

Table 1: The Prophet's social justice — principle and practice

Principle	Teaching	Practice
Equality of mankind	No superiority of Arab over non-Arab except by piety (Farewell Sermon)	Bilal, a freed Abyssinian slave, appointed muezzin of the Prophet's Mosque
Equality before the law	'If Fatima daughter of Muhammad stole, I would cut off her hand'	Refusal of intercession for the Makhzumi woman (Bukhari, Muslim)
Rights of labour	'Give the worker his wage before his sweat dries' (Ibn Majah)	His own household: ten years of service remembered by Anas without one rebuke
Protection of minorities	'I shall be the opponent of	Charter of Madinah; covenant

	whoever wrongs one under covenant' (Abu Dawud)	with the Christians of Najran
Circulation of wealth	Zakat assigned to the poor as a right (Quran 9:60)	Public treasury distributing to the needy before the elite

Conclusion

To conclude, the Prophet's teachings on social justice form a complete system: founded on the justice of God and the equal dignity of Adam's children; expressed in equality before a law that binds ruler and ruled, noble and slave; extended to wealth through zakat, honest trade and the worker's inviolable wage; carried into the family, where power is a trust; and maintained even towards non-Muslims, prisoners and enemies in war. What distinguishes his teaching from mere moralising is that he built it into institutions — courts, a treasury, covenants, a constitution for a plural city — and embodied it in a life so austere and impartial that even his opponents testified to his trustworthiness. Fourteen centuries later, the tests he set remain the sharpest measures of any society that claims his name: whether the law reaches the powerful, whether wealth circulates beyond the rich, whether the worker is paid and the minority protected, and whether the ruler can be told, to his face, that he is wrong. A community that passes those tests has understood his teaching; one that fails them has merely inherited his vocabulary.

Question 2: Describe the Rights of the Poor in Islam (20 Marks)

Describe the Rights of the Poor in Islam.

Introduction

In most moral systems, help given to the poor is charity: a free gift which the giver may bestow or withhold, for which the receiver should be grateful, and which reflects credit on the giver's generosity. Islam transforms this picture at its foundation. In the Quran and the teaching of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the poor possess rights — haqq — in the wealth of the rich: definite, enforceable claims which the wealthy are obliged to discharge, the failure to discharge which is a sin and, in the case of zakat, a punishable offence. God says of the righteous: 'And in their wealth there was a right (haqq) for the beggar and the deprived' (51:19; see also 70:24–25, where the right is ma'lum — known and specified). The Prophet's saying makes the same point from the other side: God has imposed on the wealth of the rich a duty sufficient for their poor, so that the poor suffer hunger and nakedness only because of what the rich withhold (Tabarani). This answer explains the Islamic conception of poverty and wealth, the principal rights of the poor — zakat, general charity, food, clothing, dignity, social inclusion and protection from exploitation — the institutions Islam built to secure them, and the responsibilities Islam places on the poor themselves, concluding with the relevance of the whole system today.

The Islamic Conception of Wealth and Poverty

Three Quranic principles govern everything that follows. First, absolute ownership belongs to God: 'To God belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth' (2:284). Human beings hold wealth as trustees (mustakhlafun, 57:7) and will be questioned about the trust. Second, wealth is a test for both parties: the rich are tested in gratitude and generosity, the poor in patience

and integrity, and neither wealth nor poverty is by itself a sign of God's pleasure or anger (89:15–20 corrects exactly this mistake). Third, the circulation of wealth is a moral requirement: revelation's stated aim is that wealth 'may not merely circulate among the rich' (59:7). Poverty itself is not romanticised — the Prophet sought refuge in God from poverty as he did from disbelief (Abu Dawud) and prayed, 'O God, I seek refuge in You from the trial of poverty' — nor is it treated as the poor man's fault. The Quran describes the deserving poor with tenderness: those 'restrained in God's cause, unable to move about in the land', whom 'the ignorant would think rich because of their restraint', known 'by their mark: they do not ask people importunately' (2:273). A system built on these principles will treat poverty not as a private misfortune but as a public responsibility.

The Right to Zakat

The foremost right of the poor is zakat, the third pillar of Islam, mentioned with prayer throughout the Quran as the twin proof of faith. God fixed its recipients Himself: 'Zakat expenditures are only for the poor (fuqara), the needy (masakin), those employed to administer it, those whose hearts are to be reconciled, the freeing of slaves, those in debt, in the cause of God, and the stranded traveller' (9:60). The poor stand first in the list. Zakat is levied at known rates — most famously two and a half per cent of accumulated monetary wealth, trade goods and savings above the nisab threshold held for a lunar year; specified shares of crops and livestock — and it is not optional almsgiving but a due, collected in the Prophet's state by appointed officials and distributed locally. Its obligatory character was enforced: when some tribes after the Prophet's death refused to pay zakat while accepting prayer, the caliph Abu

Bakr fought them, declaring, 'By God, I will fight whoever separates prayer from zakat' — treating the poor's right as seriously as a pillar of religion, which it is. For the poor, zakat provides a predictable, dignified entitlement: the recipient need not beg, flatter or convert; he claims what God assigned him, and scholars add that he should not even be made to feel humiliated in the claiming, for the duty of gratitude, if any, runs the other way — the giver is purified by giving (9:103: 'Take from their wealth a charity to purify and sanctify them').

Rights beyond Zakat: Sadaqah, Feeding and Maintenance

Zakat is the floor of the poor's rights, not the ceiling. The Quran and Sunnah build above it a wide structure of obligatory and recommended provision. Sadaqah — voluntary charity — is praised in the strongest terms: 'The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of God is like a seed of grain that sprouts seven ears, in every ear a hundred grains' (2:261); the Prophet called charity a proof of faith, said that it extinguishes sin as water extinguishes fire (Tirmidhi), and taught that every act of kindness, down to a smile and the removal of harm from a road, is sadaqah (Bukhari and Muslim), so that even the poor themselves can give. Certain charities are obligatory in defined situations: the expiations (kaffarat) for broken oaths, missed fasts and other lapses are discharged largely by feeding or clothing the poor or freeing a slave (5:89, 58:3–4, 90:13–16); zakat al-fitr, a fixed measure of staple food per household member, is due before the Eid al-Fitr prayer precisely 'so that the poor may be spared from asking on that day' (Abu Dawud, Ibn Majah) — a festival designed so that no one is excluded from its joy by hunger.

Feeding the hungry receives a special, almost sacramental emphasis. The Quran describes the righteous as those who 'give food, despite their love for it, to the needy, the orphan and the captive, saying: we feed you only for the face of God; we wish not from you reward or gratitude' (76:8–9). When a man asked the Prophet what Islam is best, he answered: 'To feed others and to give greetings of peace to those you know and those you do not know' (Bukhari and Muslim). The sacred hadith in Muslim is more searching still: on the Day of Resurrection God will say, 'O son of Adam, I was hungry and you did not feed Me… had you fed him, you would have found that with Me.' Nor is maintenance confined to strangers: spending on one's family is itself charity when done seeking God's pleasure (Bukhari and Muslim), relatives in need have a prior claim ('charity to a poor man is charity; to a relative it is two things — charity and upholding kinship', Tirmidhi), and a rich man whose poor relatives go unaided while he feasts has violated the Quran's command to give 'the relative his right, and the needy and the traveller' (17:26; 30:38). Islam also institutionalised generosity beyond the lifetime of the giver through waqf — charitable endowments whose income fed, taught, healed and housed the poor for centuries, from soup kitchens and hospitals to the endowments that maintained water fountains, schools and hostels across the Muslim world.

The Right to Dignity, Concealment and Inclusion

Islam guards not only the poor man's body but his honour — an aspect in which its teaching is notably ahead of mere relief systems. The Quran prefers charity given quietly: 'If you disclose your charitable gifts, it is good; but if you conceal them and give to the poor, it is better for you' (2:271), and the Prophet counted among the seven shaded by God 'a man who gives charity so

secretly that his left hand does not know what his right hand has spent' (Bukhari and Muslim). Publicity that purchases fame with the poor man's shame is condemned by the Quran's pairing of charity with the prohibition of harm: 'O you who believe, do not nullify your charities with reminders of your generosity or with injury' (2:264); the giver who follows his gift with reminders is likened to one who gives to be seen, and his reward is void. The receiver, correspondingly, is protected in his self-respect: scholars hold that one should thank the poor person who accepts, for he enables the giver's purification. The poor also have the right to inclusion: the Prophet ate with the poor, sat with them, accepted their invitations to barley bread, visited their sick and attended their funerals, and rebuked the attitude of the Makkan chiefs who wanted the poor believers kept away from his assemblies — revelation itself answered them: 'Do not drive away those who call upon their Lord morning and evening' (6:52), and the chapter 'Abasa (80) gently corrected the Prophet himself for frowning at a blind poor man while courting a wealthy notable, fixing forever the hierarchy of worth in Islam's founding text.

Protection from Exploitation

Rights are incomplete if the poor, though fed, remain prey. Islam therefore surrounds the poor with protections against the characteristic exploitations of the strong. Riba — the interest that in Arabia doubled a desperate man's debt until he and his family were forfeit — is prohibited in the Quran's severest economic language (2:275–279), and the Prophet cursed the consumer of riba, its payer, its scribe and its witnesses, saying they are alike (Muslim). Wages are protected: 'Give the worker his wage before his sweat dries' (Ibn Majah), and God declares Himself the

adversary of the employer who withholds them (Bukhari). Fraud in measure is a Quranic crime: 'Woe to those who give less than due' (83:1–3). Monopoly and hoarding of necessities are condemned — 'No one hoards but a sinner' (Muslim) — and the Prophet refused to let traders intercept goods before they reached the open market. The poor litigant is protected by equality before the law: the Prophet's refusal to exempt the noble thief established that poverty shall not mean defencelessness. Finally, debts of the destitute are a charge on zakat itself (the gharimin of 9:60), creditors are commanded to grant respite 'until a time of ease' and told that remitting the debt as charity is better still (2:280), and the Prophet at first declined to lead the funeral prayer of a man who died in unpaid debt, until the community undertook such debts — after which he announced: 'I am nearer to the believers than their own selves; whoever dies leaving a debt, its payment is upon me' (Bukhari and Muslim) — the head of state assuming the debts of the destitute dead.

Responsibilities of the Poor

Islam's poor are rights-holders, not passive objects, and the teaching assigns them dignity together with duties. The able-bodied are directed to work: the Prophet praised the man who gathers firewood and sells it as better than begging (Bukhari and Muslim), and taught that the upper hand is better than the lower. Begging without need is strongly discouraged — 'Whoever asks of people to increase his wealth asks only for live coals' (Muslim) — while begging in genuine need is no disgrace, and the concealed dignity of the poor who do not ask (2:273) is praised above all. The poor owe patience without despair, gratitude without servility, and honesty in claiming — zakat taken by one who is in fact rich is unlawful to him. And because

even the smallest kindness counts as sadaqah, the poor remain givers as well as receivers within the moral economy of Islam: the Prophet told the poor companions who lamented that the rich had carried off all the rewards, through charity they could not afford, that glorification of God, helping a man onto his mount and enjoining good were charity for them too (Muslim) — a teaching that restores the poor to full membership of the community of virtue.

Table 1: Principal rights of the poor in Islam

Right	Source	Content
Right to zakat	Quran 9:60; pillar of Islam	A fixed, claimable share of the wealth of the rich, distributed first to the poor and needy
Right to food	Quran 76:8; Bukhari and Muslim	Feeding the hungry is among the best acts of Islam; festival charity (fitr) ensures none go hungry on Eid
Right to dignity	Quran 2:264, 2:271	Secret giving preferred; no reminders, humiliation or publicity at the poor's expense
Right to fair wages and freedom from riba	Ibn Majah; Bukhari; Quran 2:275–280	Prompt wages; prohibition of usurious debt; respite and remission for the hard-pressed debtor
Right to inclusion	Quran 6:52; chapter 80	The poor may not be excluded from assemblies, mosques or community life on account of poverty

Conclusion

To conclude, the rights of the poor in Islam are real rights: specified by God, enforceable in the case of zakat, and surrounded by a moral culture that multiplies their sources — voluntary sadaqah, expiations, festival charity, family maintenance, debt relief and permanent

endowments. The system's genius lies in its combination of law and love: zakat guarantees that no Muslim need depend on another's mood for his subsistence, while the etiquette of giving — secrecy, gentleness, gratitude towards the receiver — guarantees that receiving does not cost him his dignity. Around these stand the structural protections: no usury, no hoarding, no withheld wages, no partial courts. Measured against this standard, the contemporary Muslim world, in which zakat collection is often informal and poverty widespread, falls short of its own blueprint — a fact Muslim economists increasingly acknowledge by working to revive zakat and waqf as organised institutions of social welfare. The teaching itself remains what it was in Madinah: that the poor man at the rich man's door is not a beggar for a favour but a creditor presenting, from God, a bill.

Question 3: Describe the Rights of Orphans in Islam (20 Marks)

Describe the Rights of Orphans in Islam.

Introduction

The orphan — al-yatim, a child who has lost his father — stands at the very centre of Islam's social teaching. No category of vulnerable people is mentioned in the Quran more tenderly or more frequently: the word and its derivatives occur more than twenty times, and the treatment of orphans is presented as a test of whether a society's religion is real or merely ritual. The background explains the emphasis. In pre-Islamic Arabia the orphan was defenceless prey: guardians absorbed orphan girls' property by marrying them without fair dower, or prevented their marriage to keep control of their wealth; orphan boys' inheritances were seized by

stronger relatives; and no public authority existed to intervene. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) spoke to this world as himself an orphan — his father died before his birth, his mother when he was six, his grandfather two years later — and God reminded him of that beginning as the foundation of his sympathy: 'Did He not find you an orphan and give you shelter?' (93:6), drawing the command: 'So as for the orphan, do not oppress him' (93:9). This answer sets out the orphan's rights in Islam: to protection and kind treatment, to the absolute safeguarding of his property, to maintenance, upbringing and education, to justice in marriage and inheritance, and to a honoured place in the community — together with the severe warnings Islam addresses to those who violate these rights.

The Right to Kindness, Shelter and Honourable Treatment

The first right of the orphan is to be treated with kindness and never with contempt. The Quran joins the orphan to the parents and God Himself in the charter of worship: 'Worship God and associate nothing with Him, and to parents do good, and to relatives, orphans, the needy…' (4:36). Chapter al-Ma'un makes the treatment of the orphan the very criterion of true religion: 'Have you seen the one who denies the Recompense? For that is the one who drives away the orphan and does not encourage the feeding of the poor' (107:1–3) — a devastating redefinition in which prayer performed while orphans are repelled is exposed as hypocrisy. The Prophet (peace be upon him) translated this into personal practice and promise. 'I and the one who sponsors an orphan will be like these two in Paradise,' he said, holding his index and middle fingers together (Bukhari) — the closest companionship with the Prophet himself being the reward of orphan care. He taught that the best Muslim household is the one in which an

orphan is treated well and the worst that in which he is treated badly (Ibn Majah), that a hand passed tenderly over an orphan's head softens the hardest heart (Ahmad), and that the sponsor's care should extend until the child reaches maturity and independence. The orphan, in short, is not a burden on the community's margin but a door to Paradise at its centre.

The Right to Protection of Property

The most detailed legislation in the Quran concerning any vulnerable group is the legislation protecting the orphan's property — because property, unlike the child, cannot cry out. The command is absolute: 'Indeed, those who devour the property of orphans unjustly are only consuming fire into their bellies, and they will enter a blazing Fire' (4:10) — among the most terrifying images in the Quran, fixing embezzlement of an orphan's wealth among the greatest of sins. The Prophet counted 'consuming the orphan's property' among the seven destructive sins (al-mubiqat) in the hadith recorded by Bukhari and Muslim. Guardians are commanded: 'Give orphans their property, and do not substitute the defective for the good, and do not consume their properties into your own' (4:2); 'Do not approach the orphan's property except in the best manner, until he reaches maturity' (6:152; 17:34). Mixing of funds is permitted only in fairness (2:220: 'If you mix their affairs with yours, they are your brothers; and God knows the corrupter from the reformer'), and the guardian who is rich must abstain entirely from the orphan's wealth, while the poor guardian may take only what is reasonable and recognised as fair (4:6).

The transfer of property at the end of guardianship is equally regulated, and shows the law's practicality. The orphan's property is handed over when two conditions are met: the child

reaches the age of marriage (majority) and the guardian perceives in him rushd — sound judgement in managing wealth (4:6). The handover must be witnessed: 'And when you release to them their property, take witnesses upon them; and God suffices as a Reckoner' (4:6). Regular testing of the maturing orphan's competence is prescribed earlier in the same verse — guardianship in Islam is thus a supervised trust with an audit at its end, not a paternal discretion. Classical jurists built on these verses an entire law of guardianship (wilaya): the guardian acts only in the orphan's interest, may not sell the orphan's property to himself, may not invest it in speculation that endangers the capital, is liable for loss caused by negligence, and is answerable to the judge (qadi), who represents the community's ultimate guardianship — the ruler being, in the Prophet's arrangement and in juristic doctrine, the guardian of whoever has no guardian.

The Right to Maintenance, Upbringing and Education

An orphan's rights are not exhausted by preserving his capital; he must be fed, clothed, raised and educated from it — or, if he is poor, from the community. The Quran lists orphans among the first recipients of charitable wealth (2:177, 2:215, 9:60 by extension of its categories, 76:8, 90:15–16: 'an orphan of near kinship' fed 'on a day of hunger'), and the Prophet's own household modelled the care: he raised in his home Zayd ibn Harithah and, in effect, his cousin Ali ibn Abi Talib, while his wives were commanded to be mothers to the community. Sponsorship (kafala) is Islam's characteristic institution: the sponsor (kafil) takes the orphan into his family, maintains and educates him as his own, while — and this distinguishes kafala from Western adoption — the child's lineage (nasab) is preserved: 'Call them by their fathers' names;

that is more just with God' (33:5). Islam thus secures the orphan a family without falsifying his identity or disturbing the inheritance rights of others: he keeps his name, his kinship and his property, and gains a home. Jurists and modern Muslim states have codified kafala as the standard legal form of orphan care, and contemporary orphan-sponsorship programmes run by Muslim charities — monthly maintenance, schooling and health care for hundreds of thousands of children — are its direct descendants.

Education deserves separate mention, because the orphan's future depends on it. The community that the Prophet built made the mosque a school and valued knowledge for every believer; the ransomed prisoners of Badr earned their freedom by teaching Muslim children to write. An orphan maintained but left ignorant has received only half his right: guardians are required to prepare him for independent life, which in every age has meant literacy, a skill or trade, and religious and moral formation — the rushd the Quran demands before property is released presupposes exactly such preparation. The Prophet's tenderness had this practical edge: he arranged marriages, found work and settled the affairs of the young people of his community, and he praised the widow who devotes herself to raising her orphans, comparing her striving to that of the worshipper who prays all night and the fighter in God's cause (Bukhari and Muslim, concerning the one who works for the widow and the poor).

Rights of the Orphan Girl and Justice in Marriage and Inheritance

The Quran's orphan legislation began, historically, with orphan girls, and its protection of them is precise. Verse 4:3 was revealed, as Aisha explained, concerning a guardian who wished to marry his orphan ward for her wealth or beauty while giving her less than her due dower — or

who blocked her marriage to another in order to keep her property. The revelation forbade the abuse: guardians must fear injustice and marry others instead, while verse 4:127 commands concerning orphan girls 'to whom you do not give what is prescribed for them yet desire to marry them' that justice be done and their rights paid in full. No marriage of an orphan girl is valid in Islamic law without her consent — the Prophet annulled marriages concluded without it — and her dower (mahr) is her exclusive property, payable to her, not to her guardian. In inheritance, the orphan stands in his deceased father's place within the Quran's fixed shares (4:11–12): the shares descend to him at the moment of death, his minority suspending only his management, never his ownership. A widow's children by a previous marriage, step-orphans and the children of deceased sons are all sheltered by the same rules. Where the family fails, the estate is supervised by the judge, and where there is no estate, the public treasury and the community's zakat bear the charge — for in the Prophet's state no orphan was left to beg his bread, and the caliph Umar institutionalised allowances for foundlings and orphans from the treasury, an early welfare register.

Warnings to Guardians and Society

Because the orphan cannot defend himself, Islam surrounds his rights with the strongest sanctions in its moral vocabulary. Consuming his property is eating fire (4:10). Repelling him is denying the Judgement (107:2). Neglecting him while praying is the mark of the hypocrite generation the Quran rebukes at the beginning of the chapter al-Nisa, revealed to reform precisely a community fresh from war whose widows and orphans filled Madinah. Guardians are warned that God is a Reckoner who suffices (4:6), that He knows the corrupter from the

reformer (2:220), and that the orphan's cry has a special access: the Prophet taught that the supplication of the oppressed — and who is more oppressed than a wronged orphan? — is never rejected (Bukhari). Society is warned collectively: a community in which orphans are wronged has falsified its religion whatever its rituals, for the Prophet's community was commanded to make the orphan's cause its own — 'they ask you about orphans; say: improving their condition is best' (2:220).

Table 1: The rights of orphans in Islam

Right	Key source	Content
Kind treatment and sponsorship	Quran 93:9; 107:2; Bukhari	Never to be repelled or oppressed; the sponsor is promised the Prophet's companionship in Paradise
Protection of property	Quran 4:2, 4:6, 4:10; 6:152	Guardianship as a trust; consumption of the orphan's wealth is among the seven destructive sins
Tested, witnessed handover	Quran 4:6	Property released at maturity with proven sound judgement (rushd), before witnesses
Maintenance and education	Quran 2:215; 76:8; kafala (33:5)	Maintenance, upbringing and schooling — by a sponsor family where needed — with lineage preserved
Justice in marriage and inheritance	Quran 4:3, 4:127, 4:11	Full dower, free consent, and the Quran's fixed inheritance shares descend to the orphan at once

Conclusion

To conclude, Islam gives the orphan a complete charter of rights: kindness in place of contempt, shelter in place of exposure, a sponsor promised Paradise for his care; property hedged by the

Quran's most fearsome warnings and transferred only on proof of maturity and competence, before witnesses; maintenance and education as duties of guardian, community and state; and, for the orphan girl, explicit protection of her consent, her dower and her inheritance against the very guardians appointed to protect her. The charter is rooted in the Prophet's own orphanhood and sealed by God's reminder to him — 'Did He not find you an orphan and shelter you? So do not oppress the orphan.' Few measures of a society are as reliable as this one. A civilisation may be judged by its armies, its markets or its monuments; Islam proposes that it be judged by its orphans. Where they are fed, taught, enriched with their own wealth intact and raised to dignified independence, religion is alive; where they are robbed by guardians, neglected by the state or paraded for charity's publicity, religion — whatever its public display — is, in the Quran's blunt verdict, being denied.

Question 4: Describe the Rights of Women in Islam (20 Marks)

Describe the Rights of Women in Islam.

Introduction

No subject in the study of Islam provokes more argument — inside the Muslim world and outside it — than the rights of women. Islam appeared in a seventh-century Arabia where a daughter's birth was received as a disgrace (the Quran portrays the father's face darkening with suppressed grief, 16:58), where female infanticide was practised (81:8–9), where women were inherited by their stepsons like property (4:19 forbids exactly this), and where a woman had no independent legal personality: no property of her own, no consent in her marriage, no share in

inheritance, no limit on the number of wives a man might take or on his power of divorce. In the same century, much of the rest of the world offered women little better. Against this background the Quran and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) enacted a comprehensive charter: spiritual equality, education, property, inheritance, consent in marriage, dower, maintenance, dignified treatment, protection from violence and a recognised public role. This answer sets out those rights in their categories, notes the limits Islam sets around them and the reasons it gives, and closes by distinguishing — as honest study must — between the teaching of Islam and the customs of Muslim societies, which have not always honoured it.

Spiritual and Human Equality

The foundation of women's rights in Islam is the declaration that woman is, before God, man's equal in origin, worth and moral responsibility. The Quran addresses humanity as created 'from a single soul' and its mate (4:1), recounts no Fall caused by woman — Adam and Eve alike err and alike are forgiven (2:36–37, 7:23) — and promises reward without distinction: 'Indeed, the Muslim men and Muslim women, the believing men and believing women, the obedient men and obedient women… God has prepared for them forgiveness and a great reward' (33:35). 'Whoever does righteousness, male or female, while a believer — We will give him a good life, and We will pay them their reward according to the best of what they used to do' (16:97). Women are not a secondary creation or a religious afterthought: they receive revelation's address directly, give the pledge (bay'a) to the Prophet directly (60:12), and are commanded the same prayer, fasting, charity and pilgrimage. The Prophet's words in the Farewell Sermon

fix the social consequence: 'Fear God concerning women… you have rights over them and they have rights over you' — rights are mutual, and both are answerable. Spiritual equality is not a courtesy in Islam; it is the premise from which the legal rights follow.

The Right to Life, Dignity and Education

The first right Islam gave the Arabian woman was the right to exist. The Quran condemns infanticide with a question addressed to the murdered girl herself on the Day of Judgement: 'When the female infant buried alive is asked for what sin she was killed' (81:8–9). It describes the practice as an evil judgement born of shame (16:58–59) and counts killing children for fear of poverty among the gravest sins (17:31, 6:151). The Prophet inverted the shame into honour: whoever raises two or three daughters, or sisters, with kindness will be with him in Paradise (Bukhari and Muslim), and daughters became, in his words, a shield from the Fire for their parents. Dignity followed life: the Quran commands that women be treated honourably (ma'ruf, 4:19), forbids inheriting them against their will, forbids slandering chaste women and punishes the slanderer severely (24:4), and prescribes modest dress and lowered gazes for men first (24:30) and women (24:31) as a shared discipline of public respect.

Education is a right Islam not only permitted women but urged on them. The Prophet declared seeking knowledge obligatory upon every Muslim (Ibn Majah), exempted no gender from the first command of revelation — 'Read' (96:1) — and set aside a day to teach the women of Madinah at their own request (Bukhari). The result was scholarship: Aisha, the Prophet's widow, became one of the foremost authorities of the first community, consulted by senior companions on law and hadith — 'Take half your religion from this ruddy-cheeked one (al-

Humayra)' runs the famous report of her standing — and corrected the understanding of the caliphs themselves. Umm al-Darda, Fatima al-Batayahiyyah and generations of women hadith teachers (muhaddithat), documented by modern scholarship in thousands, taught in the mosques and universities of Damascus, Cairo and Baghdad while much of Europe barred women from literacy. The right to education in Islam is thus not a modern concession but an original institution, and its denial in some Muslim societies today is a departure from, not an expression of, the Prophetic norm.

Economic Rights: Property, Earnings, Inheritance and Dower

Islam gave women full and independent legal personality in property fourteen centuries ago, at a time when English law would, until the Married Women's Property Acts of 1870–82, merge a wife's property into her husband's. The Quran states the principle in one line: 'For men is a share of what they earn, and for women is a share of what they earn' (4:32). A Muslim woman — single, married or widowed — owns, buys, sells, leases, endows and litigates in her own name; her property is not liable for her husband's debts; her earnings are hers; and her husband has no right to take any of it except by her willing gift (4:4). She may stipulate conditions in her marriage contract and may run a business, as Khadijah, the Prophet's first wife, ran one of Makkah's great trading concerns and employed the future Prophet himself. Women founded a large share of the charitable endowments (awqaf) of classical Muslim cities — schools, mosques, hospitals and fountains bearing women's names survive from Cairo to Istanbul — which they could do only because the property was indisputably theirs.

Inheritance and dower complete the economic charter. Before Islam, Arabian women inherited nothing and were themselves inherited. The Quran fixed compulsory shares for women as daughters, mothers, wives and sisters (4:7: 'For men is a share of what parents and close relatives leave, and for women is a share… a share specified'; detailed in 4:11–12 and 4:176), which cannot be written away by a will beyond the permitted third and cannot be confiscated by male relatives. That a daughter's share is half a son's is the critics' favourite point, and the system's own answer must be stated fairly: shares in Islam are tied to financial obligations. The son's share comes burdened with the duty to maintain his wife, children, parents and unmarried sisters, and to pay dower; the daughter's share is hers absolutely, with her maintenance a charge on her husband or male kin; so the comparison is not of two persons' entitlements in isolation but of two positions in a web of reciprocal duties. Similarly the dower (mahr) is the bride's own right, paid by the groom to her — not a bride-price to her father: 'Give the women their dowries as a free gift' (4:4); withholding it, or pressuring a wife to return it, is condemned in the strongest terms (4:20–21). During marriage the wife's maintenance — food, clothing, housing according to her husband's means — is entirely his obligation (65:6–7, 2:233), however wealthy she may be herself.

Rights in Marriage and Family Life

Marriage in Islam is a contract (aqd) founded on consent, described by the Quran as a solemn covenant (4:21) whose purpose is tranquillity, love and mercy (30:21). The woman's consent is a legal condition: 'A previously married woman shall not be married without her command, and a virgin shall not be married without her permission,' said the Prophet, accepting that her

permission may be shown by silence (Bukhari and Muslim); he annulled the marriage of Khansa bint Khidham, given by her father against her will (Bukhari), and gave a girl married off by her father the choice to annul (Abu Dawud). She may stipulate lawful conditions in her contract. Within marriage her rights include maintenance, kind treatment ('consort with them in kindness', 4:19), justice if there are co-wives (4:3 permits polygyny up to four only on condition of justice, and 4:129 warns how hard that justice is — read together, the verses are widely understood as a restriction narrowing towards monogamy rather than a licence), and protection from harm: the Prophet's rule 'no harm and no reciprocating harm' (Ibn Majah) underlies the jurists' remedies. If the marriage becomes intolerable, she is not trapped: she may seek khul' — release by returning the dower — established by the case of the wife of Thabit ibn Qays, whose aversion the Prophet accepted as grounds without demanding proof of cruelty (Bukhari), or judicial dissolution (faskh) for harm, desertion or failure of maintenance across the schools of law. After divorce she keeps her dower, her property and a fair provision, may not be expelled from her home during the waiting period except for clear misconduct (65:1), retains custody of young children in the first instance in the classical schools, and may not be prevented from remarrying (2:232). The Prophet's own conduct — consulting his wives, racing with Aisha, helping in the housework (Bukhari) — set the charter's living example.

Social and Public Rights

Islam's first community did not confine women to the home. Women attended the mosques — the Prophet forbade preventing them: 'Do not prevent the female servants of God from the mosques of God' (Bukhari and Muslim) — prayed, learned, asked questions publicly and

corrected even the caliph Umar in the mosque on a point of law, receiving his public acknowledgement: 'The woman is right and Umar is wrong.' Women gave the pledge of allegiance, emigrated (hijra) as principals in their own right, nursed the wounded and carried water at Uhud and other battles, and some, like Nusaybah bint Ka'b, fought in defence of the Prophet himself. Women transmitted the religion as teachers and narrators of hadith at the highest level; they traded, endowed and owned; the Prophet accepted the protection (jiwar) granted by a woman, Umm Hani, as legally binding. Historians record that Umar appointed al-Shifa bint Abdullah to a supervisory role over the market of Madinah (hisba). At the same time Islam frames public participation with its own disciplines — modest dress (24:31, 33:59), avoidance of seclusion with unrelated men, and the priority it assigns to the family — which Muslims regard not as the negation of women's rights but as the moral environment in which they are exercised; critics outside the tradition dispute that framing, and the debate between the two readings is one of the live questions of contemporary Muslim thought.

Table 1: Rights of women — before Islam in Arabia and under Islam

Matter	Pre-Islamic Arabian custom	Islamic ruling
Life	Female infanticide practised	Prohibited; raising daughters rewarded (Quran 81:8–9)
Legal personality	None; women inherited like property	Full and independent (Quran 4:32; 4:19)
Property and earnings	Controlled by male guardians	Owned, managed and litigated by the woman herself
Inheritance	Excluded	Fixed compulsory shares (Quran 4:7, 4:11–12)
Marriage	Given without consent; unlimited polygyny	Consent a condition; dower hers; polygyny limited and conditioned on justice (4:3)

Exit from marriage	No recognised route	Khul' and judicial dissolution established by the Prophet's practice
Education	No provision	Obligatory seeking of knowledge; women among the first community's scholars

Conclusion

To conclude, the rights of women in Islam form a connected charter grounded in spiritual equality: the right to life and honour in a society that buried daughters; the right to education, crowned by the scholarly authority of women like Aisha; full property, earnings, dower and fixed inheritance, held independently of father and husband; consent as the foundation of marriage, with maintenance, kindness, possible release and custody protected within it; and a real, if modesty-framed, presence in the religious and public life of the community. Two honest cautions complete the picture. First, Islamic law also assigns differentiated roles and duties — maintenance on men, a daughter's half-share balanced by others' obligations — which Islam defends as equity within a system of reciprocal burdens, not as inequality of worth; readers must judge that claim as a system, not by extracting single rules. Second, the lived reality of women in many Muslim societies — denied schooling, stripped of inheritance by custom, married without consent, subjected to violence dressed as tradition — contradicts the charter itself, and Muslim reformers from the Prophet's own example onwards have the strongest ground for attacking such customs in Islam's name. The standard is the teaching: a civilisation that gave a seventh-century woman her own property, her own consent and her own share is not fairly described as giving her nothing; it is fairly asked why its heirs so often give her less.

Question 5: Describe Social Justice and Environmental Stewardship in Islam (20 Marks)

Describe Social Justice and Environmental Stewardship in Islam.

Introduction

It may seem surprising to join social justice and the environment in a single question, but in Islamic teaching the two are one subject. The same God who commands justice between human beings appoints mankind His trustee (khalifa) over the earth (Quran 2:30), and the same corruption (fasad) that makes the strong devour the weak also makes societies poison land and sea: 'Corruption has appeared on land and sea because of what the hands of people have earned' (30:41). A mine that enriches a few while its waste destroys the water of villages, a city whose air the poor must breathe while the rich retreat to clean suburbs, forests felled for export while local people lose fuel, grazing and rain — these are simultaneously environmental crimes and social injustices, and in most of the world the environmental burden falls, predictably, on those least able to resist it: the poor, the rural, the indigenous, the unborn. Islam's teaching treats the care of creation as a trust (amana) with a social distribution, and social justice as incomplete until it includes the earth on which all justice must physically be enacted. This answer explains the Quranic foundations of stewardship, the Prophet's practical environmental teaching, the classical institutions through which Muslim societies protected common resources, the specifically social-justice dimension of environmental harm, and the relevance of the whole framework to the present ecological crisis.

Foundations: Trust, Balance and the Community of Creation

The Quran's environmental teaching rests on three foundations. The first is trusteeship. Man is khalifa on earth (2:30; 6:165) — not owner but deputy, holding creation as an amana he must answer for: 'Indeed, We offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, and they declined to bear it… but man undertook it' (33:72). Ownership belongs to God (57:7); the trustee may use, but may not waste, corrupt or bequeath a ruined estate. The second foundation is balance (mizan). God 'raised the heaven and established the balance, that you not transgress within the balance; and establish weight in justice and do not make deficient the balance' (55:7–9) — a passage classical and modern commentators alike read as joining cosmic order, commercial honesty and moral justice in a single word: the same mizan governs the scales of the market and the equilibrium of nature, and cheating in either is one sin. The third foundation is the standing of other creatures: 'There is no creature on earth nor bird flying with its wings but that they are communities like you' (6:38). Animals are umam — communities with their own God-given place — not machinery for human use; the earth itself is a mosque and a mother: the Prophet said, 'The earth has been made for me a place of prayer and a means of purification' (Bukhari and Muslim), and God calls it a cradle (20:53) spread out in trust for 'you and your cattle' alike (80:32).

The Prophet's Environmental Teaching and Practice

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) taught environmental care with a concreteness rare in ancient moral systems. On planting: 'No Muslim plants a tree or sows a field from which a bird, a human or an animal eats, but that it is charity (sadaqah) for him' (Bukhari and Muslim)

— tree-planting converted into an act of worship with continuing reward — and in the most startling formulation: 'If the Hour is about to be established and one of you has a seedling in his hand, let him plant it if he can before it is established' (Ahmad): environmental duty survives even the end of the world, because it is done for God, not for results. On waste: passing Sa'd as he performed ablution, the Prophet told him not to waste water; Sa'd asked, 'Can there be waste in ablution?' and he replied, 'Yes — even if you are at a flowing river' (Ibn Majah, Ahmad). In a water-scarce land he fixed the measure of ablution at a handful (mudd) and of bathing at a few litres, making conservation a Prophetic norm (sunnah) rather than an emergency measure. On animals: he cursed whoever takes a living creature as a target (Bukhari and Muslim); told of a man forgiven all his sins for giving water to a thirsting dog, and of a woman punished for starving a cat (Bukhari and Muslim); ordered that a slaughtered animal be spared suffering and the knife sharpened out of its sight (Muslim); and forbade the cutting of trees and the destruction of crops even in enemy territory in war. On urban cleanliness: removing harm from a road is a branch of faith (Bukhari and Muslim), faith itself having seventy-odd branches, and the polluting of paths and shaded places is cursed (Muslim).

He also created institutions. Around Madinah he declared protected zones (hima) in which trees could not be cut and game not hunted — the city's environs he made a sanctuary 'as Abraham made Makkah a sanctuary' (Bukhari and Muslim), and specific reserves such as al-Naqi' were reserved for the community's animals under rules of common access. Classical jurists and rulers developed the hima into a system of protected grazing and forest reserves — some, in Arabia, surviving into the twentieth century with their ecology intact — and added the harim, the inviolable buffer around wells, rivers and settlements within which digging and

building that would damage the common water source were forbidden. The hisba institution, the public inspectorate charged with commanding right and forbidding wrong, supervised markets, weights, pollution and nuisance: classical manuals of hisba discuss smoke, waste, tanneries' effluents and the siting of baths and mills in terms a modern environmental inspector would recognise.

Water, Land and the Rights of the Community

It is in the law of water that Islam's joining of environment and social justice is clearest. The Prophet declared: 'Muslims are partners in three: water, pasture and fire' (Abu Dawud, Ibn Majah) — the essentials of life held in common partnership and not to be monopolised. He forbade withholding surplus water to prevent others' pasture ('No one withholds excess water to withhold excess herbage thereby', Bukhari and Muslim), forbade the sale of unused surplus water, and in judging a dispute between two farmers over a stream ordered the upstream user to water his land and then release the flow to his neighbour (Bukhari and Muslim) — prior use respected, monopoly denied, downstream rights enforceable. Irrigation law in the classical books allocates turns, protects downstream villages, charges maintenance of shared canals to all beneficiaries in proportion to benefit, and treats the pollution or diversion of a common source as an actionable wrong. Land follows the same ethic: the Prophet's rule 'Whoever revives dead land, it is his' (Bukhari) encouraged reclamation, but the jurists bound it with the rights of existing communities and grazing routes, while the prohibition of israf — waste and excess (7:31: 'Eat and drink, but waste not; God loves not the wasters'; 17:27 calls squanderers 'brothers of the devils') — caps consumption itself, and the condemnation of fasad includes

those who 'destroy crops and progeny' (2:205), a verse the commentators apply to whoever ruins the productive earth.

The Social Justice Dimension of Environmental Harm

Modern environmentalism rediscovered, under the name environmental justice, what the Islamic framework assumes: environmental harm is distributed unjustly. It is the poor whose wells are poisoned by factories they do not own, whose children breathe the smoke of industries whose goods they cannot buy, whose lands are taken for mines, dams and plantations, whose coasts and fisheries are destroyed by distant consumption, and who — in countries like Pakistan, which contributes very little to global greenhouse emissions yet suffers catastrophic floods, heatwaves and glacier melt — pay first and most for a crisis they did not create. The Islamic principles surveyed above speak to each point. Trusteeship denies any generation or class the right to consume the inheritance of others: the unborn are silent partners in the amana. The mizan condemns an economy whose measures count profit and omit the destroyed river — deficient scales at civilisational size. The partnership in water, pasture and fire denies the enclosure of the commons by the powerful — the ancient wrong of the strong fencing what God made common, which the Prophet's Medina rules against monopolising surplus water directly addressed. Zakat and waqf supply instruments: classical endowments maintained public fountains, wells and gardens as permanent commons, and modern scholars increasingly hold that zakat-eligible relief includes the victims of environmental disaster, while green waqf and Islamic finance are being developed for reforestation, clean water and renewable energy. Even the law of war in Islam — no

destruction of trees, crops, wells or animals beyond need — reads today as an early law of environmental warfare protection.

The Prophet's community also supplies the distributive test for environmental policy: who breathes, who drinks, who pays. A policy that cleans the air of capital cities by exporting polluting industry to voiceless districts fails the test of 4.135 — justice even against yourselves — as surely as a partial judge does. Conversely, Islamic teaching resists an environmentalism that would preserve nature by expelling the poor from it: man is part of the trust, his livelihood (within the balance) a legitimate use, and the hima itself was a managed commons for the community's animals, not a fortress against its herdsmen. The framework thus disciplines both industrial greed and misanthropic preservation, holding together what modern debate often tears apart: the rights of the poor and the rights of the earth, because both are rights against the powerful held in trust from God.

Table 1: Islamic environmental principles and their social meaning

Principle	Source	Social-justice meaning
Trusteeship (khilafa, amana)	Quran 2:30; 33:72	No generation or class owns the earth; all hold it for God and for posterity
Balance (mizan)	Quran 55:7–9	Economic measures that omit environmental damage are false scales
Partnership in essentials	Abu Dawud: water, pasture and fire	Water and basic resources are commons; monopoly of surplus is forbidden
No waste (israf)	Quran 7:31; 17:27; Ibn Majah (water)	Conservation binds the rich consumer first; waste is a sin, not a lifestyle
Protected reserves (hima)	Bukhari and Muslim	Community reserves protect common grazing, forest and

		water for all, especially the weak
Kindness to creatures	Bukhari and Muslim (dog, cat, planting)	Animals are communities like ours; cruelty and wanton destruction are punishable sins

Conclusion

To conclude, Islam unites social justice and environmental stewardship in a single doctrine of trust. God owns; man deputises; the balance must be kept in the market, in society and in nature, because all three are one mizan. The Prophet planted trees as charity, rationed water at a flowing river, protected animals, reserved commons around his city and made the essentials of life a partnership no one may enclose. Around his teaching the jurists built law — of water turns and downstream rights, of buffers and reserves, of inspectors charged against pollution — that treated environmental harm as what it is: an injustice, usually against the weak, and always against the terms of the trust. For a world of melting ice, poisoned rivers and climate burdens falling on those least responsible, the framework offers something secular environmentalism struggles to supply: a motive deeper than self-interest — accountability to God for a borrowed earth — and a criterion deeper than efficiency — justice, for the poor of this generation and for the unborn of the next, who hold shares in the same amana and will present, on the Day of Reckoning, the same creditor's claim.