**Reforms made by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)**

If we look back on history, we see that all the prophets and messengers made some reforms to eradicate the existing prejudices in society and updated the religion of Islam for humanitarian purposes. The greatest Prophet and Messenger of Allah, Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH), also made some religious reforms in his lifetime for the welfare of mankind which were very fruitful. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) established an ideal social, religious, and governance system based on justice and equality in Arabia, immersed in injustices by making various reforms in his 23 years of prophetic life. He established monotheistic Islam in polytheistic Arabia. The reforms made by the Prophet (PBUH) can be divided into some categories. They are-

Social Reforms

Cultural Reforms

Political Reforms

Economic Reforms

Administrative Reforms

An account of different reforms of the Prophet (PBUH):

**Economic Reforms**

1. **Ban on Usury (Ribā):** The Prophet prohibited all forms of interest as oppressive and exploitative. The Qur’an declares “Allāh has permitted trade and forbidden ribā”[quranicteachings.org](https://quranicteachings.org/riba-in-the-quran/#:~:text=The%20standing%20of%20those%20who,fire%20and%20abide%20therein%20forever) and warns that those who persist in usury will be destined for Hell[quranicteachings.org](https://quranicteachings.org/riba-in-the-quran/#:~:text=The%20standing%20of%20those%20who,fire%20and%20abide%20therein%20forever). The Prophet likewise cursed “the one who consumes riba, the one who pays it… they are all the same” (Sahih Muslim)[m.islamqa.info](https://m.islamqa.info/en/answers/202904/riba-is-haram-for-the-one-who-takes-it-and-the-one-who-pays-it-and-it-is-haram-to-help-with-it-in-any-way-whatsoever?traffic_source=main_islamqa#:~:text=Muslim%20,they%20are%20all%20the%20same). Thus charging or paying interest was outlawed, shifting finance toward risk-sharing and equity.
2. **Institution of *Zakāt* (Alms Tax):** Islam established an obligatory almsgiving system to redistribute wealth. The Qur’an repeatedly couples prayer with *zakāt* (e.g. “[those] who establish prayer and give zakāt”[surahquran.com](https://surahquran.com/english-aya-3-sora-27.html#:~:text=27%3A3%20Who%20establish%20prayer%20and,in%20faith)) and defines eight eligible recipients (poor, needy, administrators, converts, slaves, debtors, cause of Allāh, travelers)[islamicstudies.info](https://www.islamicstudies.info/tafheem.php?sura=9&verse=64&to=66#:~:text=,9%3A61%5D%20And%20of%20them). The Prophet organized *zakāt* collection and spending through the public treasury (Baitul-Māl) to relieve poverty. For example, he sanctioned payments from state funds to the poor and financed public welfare projects (reported later by companions)[islamicstudies.info](https://www.islamicstudies.info/tafheem.php?sura=9&verse=64&to=66#:~:text=,9%3A61%5D%20And%20of%20them)[islamonline.net](https://islamonline.net/en/economic-system-in-islam-zakah-distributive-justice/#:~:text=The%20most%20important%20means%20is,but%20equitable%20distribution%20of%20income).
3. **Prohibition of Hoarding and Monopoly:** The Prophet strictly condemned hoarding of wealth and essential goods. The Qur’an rebukes those who “hoard up treasures of gold and silver and spend them not in the way of Allāh” with a threat of painful punishment[hidaya.org](https://www.hidaya.org/publications/zakat-information/gold-and-silver/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CThose%20who%20hoard%20up%20treasures,35). In practice he censured monopolists and food hoarders; for instance he cursed any person who deliberately withheld staple supplies from the market[islamonline.net](https://islamonline.net/en/economic-system-in-islam-zakah-distributive-justice/#:~:text=forced%20to%20sell%20but%20not,and%20moral%20teachings%20of%20Islam). This ensured that commodities remained available and reasonably priced.
4. **Fair Trade and Honest Measures:** Islamic teaching under Muhammad emphasized honesty in commerce. The Qur’an commands, “Give full measure and weight in justice; do not withhold from people the things that are their due”[islamawakened.com](https://www.islamawakened.com/quran/11/85/#:~:text=My%20people%2C%20in%20fairness%2C%20give,spread%20corruption%20in%20the%20land). Prophet Muhammad reinforced this by forbidding all forms of fraud (he warned “whoever cheats is not one of us”). He also banned speculative trading practices: for example, Sahih Bukhari records that he forbade intercepting a seller on the way to market to exploit him[islamonline.net](https://islamonline.net/en/economic-system-in-islam-zakah-distributive-justice/#:~:text=seller,%E2%80%99%20This%20was%20forbidden). These rules established strict standards of weights, measures, and market conduct.
5. **Inheritance and Property Rights:** Pre-Islamic Arabia had no fixed inheritance laws, but the Qur’an codified detailed shares. Allah “commands you regarding your children: the share of the male will be twice that of the female” and specifies fixed portions for daughters, parents, spouses etc.[quran.com](https://quran.com/en/an-nisa/11#:~:text=Allah%20commands%20you%20regarding%20your,Knowing%2C%20All). Thus women and children gained guaranteed property rights. The Prophet applied these Qur’anic laws, ensuring widows and daughters inherited. He also affirmed women’s right to own and control property (e.g. each Muslim woman retained the dower given at marriage).
6. **Prohibition of Gambling and Intoxicants:** Islam banned gambling and alcohol, which were common economic vices. The Qur’an declares “O you who believe… intoxicants and gambling… are an abomination of Satan’s handiwork, so avoid them”[muhammadiislam.org](https://muhammadiislam.org/reforms-made-by-the-prophet-muhammad-pbuh/#:~:text=After%20the%20emergence%20of%20Islam,Sura%3AAl%20Maidah%2C%20verse%3A90%5D.%E2%80%9D). Muhammad enforced this ban – he forbade drinking and betting in society and stopped industries built on them. Redirecting spending from gambling/alcohol to productive ends helped stabilize the economy and protect family wealth.
7. **Distribution of Spoils (Khums):** The Prophet instituted a regulated scheme for war booty. The Qur’an ordains that one-fifth of all “war-booty… for Allāh and the Messenger… to [be spent] on orphans, the needy, and travelers”[legacy.quran.com](https://legacy.quran.com/8/41#:~:text=Sahih%20International). Muhammad followed this: one-fifth of conquered wealth went into the public treasury (supporting the poor and state needs) while the remaining four-fifths were divided among combatants. This ensured that gains from war were partly communal.
8. **Public Treasury and Taxation:** Muhammad organized public finance with the collection of *zakāt*, spoils, and later tribute. In Medina he treated *zakāt* contributions as state revenue to be spent on public welfare. He also introduced *jizya* (a tax on non-Muslims) and *kharāj* (land tax) in conquered territories[muhammadiislam.org](https://muhammadiislam.org/reforms-made-by-the-prophet-muhammad-pbuh/#:~:text=%2A%20Introducing%20an%20exploitation,of%20war%20among%20the%20warriors). These revenues funded the state budget. In this way a nascent Islamic fiscal system was established under the Prophet’s leadership[legacy.quran.com](https://legacy.quran.com/8/41#:~:text=Sahih%20International)[muhammadiislam.org](https://muhammadiislam.org/reforms-made-by-the-prophet-muhammad-pbuh/#:~:text=%2A%20Introducing%20an%20exploitation,of%20war%20among%20the%20warriors).
9. **Debt Formalization:** The Prophet emphasized fairness in lending by requiring written contracts. The Qur’an commands believers, “When you contract a debt for a specified term, write it down… let a scribe write it [in justice]”[surahquran.net](https://surahquran.net/english-aya-282-sora-2.html#:~:text=16%20Image%3A%20surah%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%82%D8%B1%D8%A9%20ayah,the%20witnesses%20refuse%20when%20they). Muhammad implemented this injunction by insisting debts be documented and witnessed, minimizing disputes. This was a major change from the previous tribal custom of hand-shake debts, promoting financial transparency and security[surahquran.net](https://surahquran.net/english-aya-282-sora-2.html#:~:text=16%20Image%3A%20surah%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%82%D8%B1%D8%A9%20ayah,the%20witnesses%20refuse%20when%20they).
10. **Encouragement of Charity and Generosity:** Beyond mandatory *zakāt*, Muhammad encouraged voluntary charity. He praised giving even small amounts for God’s sake and warned against stinginess. For example, he noted that Allāh “takes away wealth from those who hoard it” (Qur’an 3:180) and exhorted believers to spend freely in Allāh’s way[quranicteachings.org](https://quranicteachings.org/riba-in-the-quran/#:~:text=%D9%83%D9%8E%D9%81%D9%91%D9%8E%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%8D%20%D8%A3%D9%8E%D8%AB%D9%90%D9%8A%D9%85%D9%8D)[hidaya.org](https://www.hidaya.org/publications/zakat-information/gold-and-silver/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CThose%20who%20hoard%20up%20treasures,35). Under his leadership, charitable endowments and welfare stipends (from *zakāt*, spoil, and gifts) became an integral part of society’s economy.

**Political Reforms**

1. **Constitution of Medina:** Muhammad drafted the **Ṣaḥīfa al-Madīna**, the first written constitution of an Islamic state[muhammadiislam.org](https://muhammadiislam.org/reforms-made-by-the-prophet-muhammad-pbuh/#:~:text=,based%20on%20justice%20and%20equality). This charter created a multi-religious polity, uniting Muslims, Jews, and others under a single “ummah” (community) bound by mutual rights and responsibilities[muhammadiislam.org](https://muhammadiislam.org/reforms-made-by-the-prophet-muhammad-pbuh/#:~:text=,based%20on%20justice%20and%20equality). It recognized freedom of religion for “People of the Book,” guaranteed mutual defense, and set out laws against treachery. By establishing state governance above tribal loyalties, it laid the foundation for Islamic political order.
2. **Unity of the Ummah and Tribal Equality:** The Prophet abolished the old tribal hierarchy by uniting all believers as one community. He famously taught in the Farewell Sermon that “an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab… except by piety.” The Qur’an likewise states, “O mankind! We have created you from male and female and made you nations and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allāh is the most righteous of you”[islamicstudies.info](https://www.islamicstudies.info/tafheem.php?sura=49&verse=11&to=13#:~:text=%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%91%D9%B0%D9%87%D9%8E%20%D8%AA%D9%8E%D9%88%D9%91%D9%8E%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%8C%20%D8%B1%D9%91%D9%8E%D8%AD%D9%90%D9%8A%DB%A1%D9%85%D9%8C%E2%80%8F%20%20%EE%80%8E%EE%80%91%EE%80%92%EE%80%8F,%D8%95%20%D8%A7%D9%90%D9%86%D9%91%D9%8E%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%91%D9%B0%D9%87%D9%8E%20%D8%B9%D9%8E%D9%84%D9%90%D9%8A%DB%A1%D9%85%D9%8C%20%D8%AE%D9%8E%D8%A8%D9%90%D9%8A%DB%A1%D8%B1%D9%8C%E2%80%8F). Under Muhammad, tribal identities became secondary to faith, ending endless clan feuds and blood vengeance.
3. **Religious Pluralism:** Muhammad protected minority rights through treaties. In Medina he guaranteed Christians and Jews the freedom to worship according to their scriptures as long as they lived peacefully under the state. He also engaged diplomatically with other religious communities (e.g. sending letters to Christian and Jewish leaders inviting them to Islam with protection). The notion of *ahl al-dhimma* (protected peoples) was introduced during his time, reflecting unprecedented religious toleration.
4. **Women’s Political Rights:** Pre-Islamic women had virtually no agency, but Muhammad reformed this. He explicitly required a woman’s consent in her marriage – Aisha reported that when he was asked if women should be asked for marriage consent, he replied “Yes. If a virgin feels shy and remains silent, her silence means consent”[sunnah.com](https://sunnah.com/bukhari:6946#:~:text=Narrated%20). He also included women as witnesses and leaders in certain circumstances (e.g. he involved female companions in judicial testimonies). In the public sphere, women could own property and voice complaints to the Prophet, indicating improved status.
5. **Abolition of Female Infanticide:** One of Islam’s earliest social reforms was banning the custom of burying newborn girls alive. The Qur’an condemns those who “when news is brought of a newborn girl, bury [her] alive out of shame”[islamicstudies.info](https://islamicstudies.info/quran/ishraq.php?sura=16&verse=51&to=60#:~:text=what%20%DB%8C%D9%8E%D8%B4%D9%92%D8%AA%D9%8E%D9%87%D9%8F%D9%88%D9%92%D9%86%D9%8E%C2%A0%EF%94%B8they%20desire%20%D9%88%D9%8E%20%D8%A7%D9%90%D8%B0%D9%8E%D8%A7,is%29%20what%20%DB%8C%D9%8E%D8%AD%D9%92%D9%83%D9%8F%D9%85%D9%8F%D9%88%D9%92%D9%86%D9%8E%C2%A0%EF%94%BAthey%20decide). Muhammad enforced this edict. Under his influence the community abandoned all infanticidal practices; each infant, boy or girl, was now protected by law. This marked a dramatic cultural and political break with jahiliyyah norms.
6. **Rule of Law (Shariʿa) over Tribal Custom:** Muhammad elevated Qur’anic law above tribal vendettas. Instead of blood feuds, disputes were settled by appointed judges applying Divinely revealed rulings. He enforced Qur’anic punishments (e.g. qisas – equal retaliation – as in Quran 5:45) and fixed compensation laws (such as blood money). Tribal leaders could no longer unilaterally punish crimes; the community followed just statutes. All legal judgments had to align with the Qur’an and Sunnah, curbing arbitrary tribal justice.
7. **Consultation (Shūrā):** The Prophet practiced and encouraged consultative governance. He routinely consulted his Companions on major decisions (for instance, strategy before battles or treaties), setting a precedent for *shūrā* (council). When choosing a successor he deferred to the elders (e.g. selecting Abu Bakr by consensus). This established the Islamic principle that leaders should seek counsel rather than rule autocratically.
8. **End of Dynastic Kingship:** Muhammad made clear that no hereditary monarchy was to arise in Islam. In his Farewell Sermon he reportedly said his community would be guided by consultation, and he forbade appointing his own son as successor. He refused any title of kingship, declaring himself only a messenger. After his death his Companions followed this by electing Caliphs rather than passing leadership by bloodline. In this way he implanted the ideal that authority belongs to the Muslim community, not to a single family.
9. **Diplomacy and Treaties:** Muhammad revolutionized tribal warfare by treating defeated tribes as protected allies rather than slaves. He established truces (e.g. the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah) that respected enemy rights while safeguarding Muslim interests. He issued covenants (the Najrān pact, Constitution of Medina) that guaranteed security and justice for non-Muslims under the state. Such formal diplomacy and respect for treaties replaced the previous automatic extermination of foes, signaling a new international ethics.
10. **Citizenship Rights:** Under Muhammad the concept of citizenship in Medina transcended tribe. All members of the *ummah* – migrants (Muhājirūn), helpers (Anṣār), and later converts – were entitled to security and welfare. He instituted mutual financial support (e.g. the “brotherhood” between Ansar and Muhajirun) so newcomers became integrated and protected. This created a novel sense of national community, equalizing Arabs and non-Arabs, rich and poor, under one polity.

**Administrative Reforms**

1. **Appointment of Officials and Judges:** Muhammad established a professional administration by appointing qualified governors and judges. For example, he chose ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib as judge over Yemen and Muʿādh ibn Jabal over another region[systemofislam.com](https://systemofislam.com/article/introduction-to-system-of-islam/10.3.7-the-appointment-of-judges#:~:text=actions%20of%20the%20Messenger%20of,the%20qadi%20%E2%80%98Aam%20are%20concerned). This system replicated in Medina through Qāḍīs for disputes. By delegating judicial authority to trusted Companions[systemofislam.com](https://systemofislam.com/article/introduction-to-system-of-islam/10.3.7-the-appointment-of-judges#:~:text=actions%20of%20the%20Messenger%20of,the%20qadi%20%E2%80%98Aam%20are%20concerned), the Prophet built an organized legal bureaucracy rather than arbitrary clan rule.
2. **Public Treasury (Bayt al-Māl):** Muhammad created a state treasury for public revenues. Qur’anic law allocated a fifth of war spoils to the treasury[legacy.quran.com](https://legacy.quran.com/8/41#:~:text=Sahih%20International), and *zakāt* collections were treated as official funds. The Prophet himself supervised these resources: he issued state stipends to the poor, orphans, and needy, and used public funds for communal projects. In effect, he established the *Bayt al-Māl* (public treasury) to administer taxes and charity under state control[legacy.quran.com](https://legacy.quran.com/8/41#:~:text=Sahih%20International).
3. **Written Contracts and Documentation:** To ensure accountability, Muhammad mandated documentation of financial agreements. The Qur’an commands, “When you contract a debt… write it down; let a scribe write [it] between you in justice” (2:282)[surahquran.net](https://surahquran.net/english-aya-282-sora-2.html#:~:text=16%20Image%3A%20surah%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%82%D8%B1%D8%A9%20ayah,the%20witnesses%20refuse%20when%20they). The Prophet enforced this by requiring witnesses and written records for loans and business deals[surahquran.net](https://surahquran.net/english-aya-282-sora-2.html#:~:text=16%20Image%3A%20surah%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%82%D8%B1%D8%A9%20ayah,the%20witnesses%20refuse%20when%20they). This was an administrative revolution: government scribes and judges could later audit or enforce contracts, preventing fraud.
4. **Fair Market Regulation:** He implemented market regulations to prevent exploitation. Administratively, he forbade profiteering (monopolization) and forced sales at fair prices if food was hoarded. In one Sahih report he cursed anyone who withheld staple goods from the market[islamonline.net](https://islamonline.net/en/economic-system-in-islam-zakah-distributive-justice/#:~:text=forced%20to%20sell%20but%20not,and%20moral%20teachings%20of%20Islam). Likewise, he prohibited predatory middlemen practices (e.g. forbidding a merchant from buying goods from a seller en route to market just to resell at higher price)[islamonline.net](https://islamonline.net/en/economic-system-in-islam-zakah-distributive-justice/#:~:text=seller,%E2%80%99%20This%20was%20forbidden). These rules, enforced by local officials, stabilized Medina’s marketplace.
5. **Zakat Administration:** Muhammad institutionalized the collection and distribution of *zakāt*. He appointed officers (known as *nazirs*) to collect *zakāt* revenue and distribute it according to Qur’anic categories. This administrative setup was so systematic that within a few years nearly every needy Muslim in Medina and elsewhere received regular support from *zakāt*. (Later sources note Muʿādh ibn Jabal collected *zakāt* for much of Arabia.) The Prophet’s early establishment of *zakāt* bureaucracy became a model for Islamic state finance[islamonline.net](https://islamonline.net/en/economic-system-in-islam-zakah-distributive-justice/#:~:text=The%20most%20important%20means%20is,but%20equitable%20distribution%20of%20income).
6. **Inheritance Settlements:** To administer the new inheritance laws, Muhammad sometimes intervened personally. For example, he gave specific rulings on complex estates according to Qur’anic proportions. As a result, estates were divided by judges rather than by tribal leaders. Administratively this meant the state enforced fixed inheritance shares for heirs (as in Qur’an 4:11) instead of arbitrary tribal customs.
7. **Regulation of Civic Duty:** Muhammad set rules for communal duties and charity at the state level. He decreed, for instance, that pilgrims must perform communal rites (prayers, sacrifice) under state supervision. He also directed Muslims to pool resources for defense (e.g. villagers contributing animals for army use). Through these regulations, local communities came to function under administrative orders of the Prophet’s government.
8. **Standardization of Currency and Weights:** The Prophet standardized common measures to ensure administrative consistency. He endorsed use of specific currencies (gold dinars, silver dirhams) and precise scales for weight. Government officials in Medina would calibrate their weights in the mosque with a measure kept there. Likewise, he approved fixing salaries of soldiers (a stipend of dates and barley) so that official payrolls could be managed. While less documented, these measures reflect a move toward uniform administrative practice.
9. **Institution of Public Worship Schedule:** Muhammad organized public prayer as a civic institution. He introduced the call to prayer (adhan) for the first time, and appointed Bilāl as muezzin. He also fixed Friday as a day of congregational prayer (Qur’an 62:9) and established the mosque as a city hall (the Prophet personally led multiple daily prayers in Al-Masjid an-Nabawī[muhammadiislam.org](https://muhammadiislam.org/reforms-made-by-the-prophet-muhammad-pbuh/#:~:text=Founding%20Masjid%20E%20Nabawi%3A)). These measures effectively scheduled the day around state-endorsed activities, blending religion with public administration[muhammadiislam.org](https://muhammadiislam.org/reforms-made-by-the-prophet-muhammad-pbuh/#:~:text=Founding%20Masjid%20E%20Nabawi%3A).
10. **Diplomatic Outreach and Record-Keeping:** Muhammad maintained a register of treaties and letters. He corresponded with rulers of Byzantium, Persia, and Yemen, outlining Islamic principles and terms of peace. Internally, he ensured that pledges (e.g. Medina’s tribal alliances) were documented in writing. This bureaucratic habit of record-keeping (such as the written Constitution of Medina[muhammadiislam.org](https://muhammadiislam.org/reforms-made-by-the-prophet-muhammad-pbuh/#:~:text=,based%20on%20justice%20and%20equality)) was unprecedented in Arabia and laid groundwork for later Islamic administration.

**Social Reforms**

1. **Women’s Rights:** Muhammad dramatically improved women’s social status. He affirmed that women could inherit property (Qur’an 4:7–11)[quran.com](https://quran.com/en/an-nisa/11#:~:text=Allah%20commands%20you%20regarding%20your,Knowing%2C%20All) and own businesses. He required a woman’s consent to marriage – “her silence means her consent,” he taught[sunnah.com](https://sunnah.com/bukhari:6946#:~:text=Narrated%20) – and ensured her the right to a fair dower. He also supported widows and orphans: for example, the Qur’an bans mistreatment of orphans and the Prophet set personal examples by caring for orphaned children. These changes gave women legal and economic protections that had never existed before.
2. **Abolition of Female Infanticide:** The Prophet universally prohibited the pre-Islamic custom of killing baby girls. The Qur’an explicitly condemns those who “kill their children for fear of poverty” (among whom infant girls were killed)[islamicstudies.info](https://islamicstudies.info/quran/ishraq.php?sura=16&verse=51&to=60#:~:text=what%20%DB%8C%D9%8E%D8%B4%D9%92%D8%AA%D9%8E%D9%87%D9%8F%D9%88%D9%92%D9%86%D9%8E%C2%A0%EF%94%B8they%20desire%20%D9%88%D9%8E%20%D8%A7%D9%90%D8%B0%D9%8E%D8%A7,is%29%20what%20%DB%8C%D9%8E%D8%AD%D9%92%D9%83%D9%8F%D9%85%D9%8F%D9%88%D9%92%D9%86%D9%8E%C2%A0%EF%94%BAthey%20decide). Under Muhammad, this practice was outlawed. Girl children were henceforth legally protected, and care for orphans of either sex became a religious duty (see Qur’an 93:9 and related hadith). This saved countless lives and altered Arabia’s demographic and moral fabric.
3. **Racial and Tribal Equality:** Muhammad broke down ethnic and class barriers. He insisted all humans are equal before God, regardless of tribe or color (Qur’an 49:13[islamicstudies.info](https://www.islamicstudies.info/tafheem.php?sura=49&verse=11&to=13#:~:text=%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%91%D9%B0%D9%87%D9%8E%20%D8%AA%D9%8E%D9%88%D9%91%D9%8E%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%8C%20%D8%B1%D9%91%D9%8E%D8%AD%D9%90%D9%8A%DB%A1%D9%85%D9%8C%E2%80%8F%20%20%EE%80%8E%EE%80%91%EE%80%92%EE%80%8F,%D8%95%20%D8%A7%D9%90%D9%86%D9%91%D9%8E%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%91%D9%B0%D9%87%D9%8E%20%D8%B9%D9%8E%D9%84%D9%90%D9%8A%DB%A1%D9%85%D9%8C%20%D8%AE%D9%8E%D8%A8%D9%90%D9%8A%DB%A1%D8%B1%D9%8C%E2%80%8F)). For instance, he affirmed that a white man has no innate superiority over a black man. In practice he demonstrated this by promoting companions of diverse backgrounds (such as Bilāl al-Ḥabashī, an Ethiopian freed slave, as mu’azzin) and calling Ansar and Muhajirun “brothers.” This was revolutionary in a caste-conscious society.
4. **Rights of Neighbors:** The Prophet elevated the status of neighbors. He taught that a Muslim’s faith is reflected in how kindly he treats his next-door neighbors. He warned, “He will not enter Paradise whose neighbor is not safe from his harm”[seekersguidance.org](https://seekersguidance.org/answers/general-answers-feeds/how-should-we-deal-with-a-bad-neighbor/#:~:text=whose%20neighbor%20is%20not%20safe,Bukhari%3B%20Muslim) (also “By Allāh, he does not believe, by Allāh, he does not believe…” meaning lack of faith for someone who harms neighbors[seekersguidance.org](https://seekersguidance.org/answers/general-answers-feeds/how-should-we-deal-with-a-bad-neighbor/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CBy%20Allah%2C%20he%20does%20not,Bukhari%3B%20Muslim)). Harming a neighbor was thus deemed a grave sin. Under Muhammad’s guidance, Medina citizens began actively helping and respecting neighbors, regardless of faith.
5. **Preservation of Family Ties:** Maintaining kinship (*silat al-raḥm*) was strongly enforced. Muhammad said explicitly, “No one who severs ties of kinship will enter Paradise”[m.islamqa.info](https://m.islamqa.info/en/answers/12292/upholding-the-ties-of-kinship-is-obligatory-to-the-extent-that-one-is-able-to-do-it?traffic_source=main_islamqa#:~:text=And%20the%20Prophet%20,by%20Muslim%20in%20his%20Saheeh). He repeatedly instructed Muslims to honor their parents (he advised a man asking “whom should I honor?”: “Your mother” – three times, then “your father,” then nearest kin)[m.islamqa.info](https://m.islamqa.info/en/answers/12292/upholding-the-ties-of-kinship-is-obligatory-to-the-extent-that-one-is-able-to-do-it?traffic_source=main_islamqa#:~:text=When%20a%20man%20asked%20him%2C,%E2%80%9D%20Also%20narrated%20by%20Muslim). These teachings reformed tribal kinship—turning arbitrary tribal loyalty into a moral duty of caring for relatives. Neglecting family was socially unacceptable under Islam.
6. **Care for the Poor and Vulnerable:** Beyond charity, the Prophet established norms of social support. He mandated feeding the hungry, clothing the needy, and caring for orphans. For example, he exhorted: “Whoever removes a worldly grief from a believer, Allah will remove from him one of the griefs of the Day of Judgment.” While not a formal law, this ethos led the community to institute social safety nets. The aged, disabled, and migrants were explicitly entitled to community help. The Qur’an enjoins that “Allāh burdens not a soul beyond its capacity” (Q2:286), and Muhammad implemented this by relieving individuals of unfair financial burdens (e.g. forgiving debts) when needed.
7. **Abolition of Unjust Practices:** The Prophet eradicated many pre-Islamic injustices. He forbade the ritual of burying one’s daughters or children alive[islamicstudies.info](https://islamicstudies.info/quran/ishraq.php?sura=16&verse=51&to=60#:~:text=what%20%DB%8C%D9%8E%D8%B4%D9%92%D8%AA%D9%8E%D9%87%D9%8F%D9%88%D9%92%D9%86%D9%8E%C2%A0%EF%94%B8they%20desire%20%D9%88%D9%8E%20%D8%A7%D9%90%D8%B0%D9%8E%D8%A7,is%29%20what%20%DB%8C%D9%8E%D8%AD%D9%92%D9%83%D9%8F%D9%85%D9%8F%D9%88%D9%92%D9%86%D9%8E%C2%A0%EF%94%BAthey%20decide), ended the jealously over female heirs, and outlawed tribal honor killings. He condemned acts like killing an infant for fear he will share food (narrated among the greatest sins[seekersguidance.org](https://seekersguidance.org/answers/general-answers-feeds/how-should-we-deal-with-a-bad-neighbor/#:~:text=the%20greatest%3F%E2%80%99%20He%20said%2C%20%E2%80%98To,Hikam)). Marriage practices were reformed too: he limited polygamy (Q4:3) and protected women’s rights in divorce. These social reforms introduced justice and compassion where once was cruelty and exploitation.
8. **Modesty and Moral Etiquette:** Muhammad taught new moral and social etiquette. He mandated modest dress (Qur’an 33:59, for example, commanded women to draw their veils) and promoted humility in demeanor. He emphasized honesty and forbade lying and slander. In daily conduct he set examples – greeting people with “As-Salāmu ʿAlaykum,” honoring guests (instructing that “whoever believes in Allāh and the Last Day, let him honor his guest”[seekersguidance.org](https://seekersguidance.org/answers/general-answers-feeds/how-should-we-deal-with-a-bad-neighbor/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CWhoever%20believes%20in%20Allah%20and,%E2%80%9D)), and living simply. These norms transformed the ethical culture of society, reducing arrogance and reinforcing mutual respect.

**Cultural Reforms**

1. **Absolute Monotheism:** Muhammad replaced Arabia’s polytheistic culture with pure monotheism. He famously taught **Tawḥīd** (Oneness of God), saying “He is Allāh, the One; Allāh, the Eternal Refuge; He neither begets nor is born…” (Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ)[muhammadiislam.org](https://muhammadiislam.org/reforms-made-by-the-prophet-muhammad-pbuh/#:~:text=The%20Prophet%20Muhammad%20,4). This overturned centuries of idol worship: upon conquering Mecca he had all idols destroyed and rededicated the Kaʿbah to Allah alone[muhammadiislam.org](https://muhammadiislam.org/reforms-made-by-the-prophet-muhammad-pbuh/#:~:text=Renovation%20of%20the%20House%20of,Kaaba). Culturally, the Shahādah (declaration of faith) became the central creed, shaping every belief and practice away from tribal gods to one universal God.
2. **Foundation of Communal Worship:** The Prophet established Islam’s communal religious culture. He built the first mosque at Medina (Al-Masjid an-Nabawī)[muhammadiislam.org](https://muhammadiislam.org/reforms-made-by-the-prophet-muhammad-pbuh/#:~:text=Founding%20Masjid%20E%20Nabawi%3A) and instituted the call to prayer (adhān) by Bilāl. He also originated the Friday congregational prayer, making Friday (*al-Jumuʿah*) a weekly community gathering. These innovations turned prayer from a private act into a civic event. Religious rituals (the five daily prayers, Ramadan fast, Eid festivals) became shared cultural experiences, binding the society in common observance.
3. **Renewal of Islamic Festivals:** Muhammad transformed pre-Islamic rites into Islamic ones. He established two major festivals: ʿĪd al-Fiṭr (at Ramadan’s end) and ʿĪd al-Aḍḥā (during Hajj season), prescribing specific prayers and charitable practices. These gatherings replaced old pagan celebrations, creating Islamic public holidays celebrated by all. For example, after Ramadan’s fast he led the *Eid* prayer and gave away charity, setting a yearly pattern that remains central in Muslim culture.
4. **Prohibition of Vices (Alcohol and Gambling):** The Prophet uprooted culturally entrenched vices. Drinking and gambling were once common in Arab festivals; Muhammad banned them outright. The Qur’an calls intoxicants and games of chance “a sin… an abomination”[muhammadiislam.org](https://muhammadiislam.org/reforms-made-by-the-prophet-muhammad-pbuh/#:~:text=After%20the%20emergence%20of%20Islam,Sura%3AAl%20Maidah%2C%20verse%3A90%5D.%E2%80%9D), and Muhammad enforced this by stopping all public drinking and betting. This abruptly changed cultural life: wine‑parties ceased, and entertainment shifted toward poetry, sports, and lawful enjoyment. Over time, social events centered on family, religion, and celebration without drunkenness.
5. **Encouragement of Arts within Limits:** While forbidding immoral pastimes, the Prophet encouraged wholesome cultural expression. He allowed singing and poetry at weddings and praised eloquence that glorified faith. For instance, companions composed and recited poetry praising God and the Prophet. At the same time, he disapproved of songs and poetry that promoted licentiousness or idol worship. Thus a new Islamic culture of literature, calligraphy, and architecture began to emerge, celebrating God and moral values.
6. **Hospitality and Charity:** Muhammad elevated hospitality as a social value. He taught that honoring guests and feeding the poor are among the best deeds. For example, he said, “He who believes in Allāh and the Last Day, let him honor his guest”[seekersguidance.org](https://seekersguidance.org/answers/general-answers-feeds/how-should-we-deal-with-a-bad-neighbor/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CWhoever%20believes%20in%20Allah%20and,%E2%80%9D). This redefined cultural norms: Arab hospitality (once tribal) became enshrined as a religious duty. Rich and poor alike were expected to welcome travelers and visitors warmly. As a result, generosity became a cultural hallmark of Muslim society.
7. **Dress and Modesty Codes:** The Prophet instituted new norms of dress for modesty. He encouraged covering the body and wearing simple, clean attire. He reportedly advised women to cover their chests with a portion of their garments, and urged men to dress with decency (covering from navel to knee, wearing a turban or cap). While local styles remained, these rules modestly changed attire toward humility rather than showiness. Over time, Islamic modesty became a key cultural marker, influencing clothing, gender interaction, and public conduct.
8. **Language and Knowledge:** Muhammad championed education, especially literacy for understanding scripture. He began the culture of writing by commissioning the Qur’an’s revelations to be transcribed. He also urged learning: a famous hadith (collected by others) states that “seeking knowledge is obligatory on every Muslim.” This cultural emphasis led to widespread Qur’anic literacy. Arabic was elevated as the language of religion and administration, uniting diverse peoples under one linguistic culture. Islamic scholarship (later) grew directly from this early reform.
9. **Oral and Written Traditions:** Finally, Muhammad established the practice of preserving religious teachings. He had his sayings and practices (Sunnah) transmitted by narrators, and companions memorized and later recorded his life and judgments. This created a culture that valued hadith and scholarly debate. The emphasis on both the Quran and authenticated hadith shaped a literary and scholarly tradition. By insisting that his own example be recorded and followed, Muhammad initiated the Islamic cultural heritage of jurisprudence, theology, and ethics.

**Sources:** The above points are supported by the Qur’an and authentic Hadith (e.g. Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim), as well as classical Islamic histories and commentaries[quranicteachings.org](https://quranicteachings.org/riba-in-the-quran/#:~:text=The%20standing%20of%20those%20who,fire%20and%20abide%20therein%20forever)[m.islamqa.info](https://m.islamqa.info/en/answers/202904/riba-is-haram-for-the-one-who-takes-it-and-the-one-who-pays-it-and-it-is-haram-to-help-with-it-in-any-way-whatsoever?traffic_source=main_islamqa#:~:text=Muslim%20,they%20are%20all%20the%20same)[legacy.quran.com](https://legacy.quran.com/8/41#:~:text=Sahih%20International)[islamicstudies.info](https://islamicstudies.info/quran/ishraq.php?sura=16&verse=51&to=60#:~:text=what%20%DB%8C%D9%8E%D8%B4%D9%92%D8%AA%D9%8E%D9%87%D9%8F%D9%88%D9%92%D9%86%D9%8E%C2%A0%EF%94%B8they%20desire%20%D9%88%D9%8E%20%D8%A7%D9%90%D8%B0%D9%8E%D8%A7,is%29%20what%20%DB%8C%D9%8E%D8%AD%D9%92%D9%83%D9%8F%D9%85%D9%8F%D9%88%D9%92%D9%86%D9%8E%C2%A0%EF%94%BAthey%20decide)[islamicstudies.info](https://www.islamicstudies.info/tafheem.php?sura=49&verse=11&to=13#:~:text=%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%91%D9%B0%D9%87%D9%8E%20%D8%AA%D9%8E%D9%88%D9%91%D9%8E%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%8C%20%D8%B1%D9%91%D9%8E%D8%AD%D9%90%D9%8A%DB%A1%D9%85%D9%8C%E2%80%8F%20%20%EE%80%8E%EE%80%91%EE%80%92%EE%80%8F,%D8%95%20%D8%A7%D9%90%D9%86%D9%91%D9%8E%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%91%D9%B0%D9%87%D9%8E%20%D8%B9%D9%8E%D9%84%D9%90%D9%8A%DB%A1%D9%85%D9%8C%20%D8%AE%D9%8E%D8%A8%D9%90%D9%8A%DB%A1%D8%B1%D9%8C%E2%80%8F)[systemofislam.com](https://systemofislam.com/article/introduction-to-system-of-islam/10.3.7-the-appointment-of-judges#:~:text=actions%20of%20the%20Messenger%20of,the%20qadi%20%E2%80%98Aam%20are%20concerned)[seekersguidance.org](https://seekersguidance.org/answers/general-answers-feeds/how-should-we-deal-with-a-bad-neighbor/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CBy%20Allah%2C%20he%20does%20not,Bukhari%3B%20Muslim)[m.islamqa.info](https://m.islamqa.info/en/answers/12292/upholding-the-ties-of-kinship-is-obligatory-to-the-extent-that-one-is-able-to-do-it?traffic_source=main_islamqa#:~:text=And%20the%20Prophet%20,by%20Muslim%20in%20his%20Saheeh). These reforms reflect the Prophet’s implementation of Islamic law and principles to transform Arabian society.

Sources