

DATE: ___/___/___

Q. What is Islam? Enlist its salient features.

Ans ISLAM:

Word Islam is derivative of three Arabic roots words SLAM, which connote interrelated meanings of surrender, submission, commitment and peace. It means to completely submit before the will of Allah. The Almighty and to make peace - peace with Allah, peace with one's self and with the creation of Allah - through wholly surrendering before Allah's commands and seeking His divine guidance.

Allah - The Almighty mentions in Quran:

“On this day, I have perfected your religion; completed my favors upon you; and chose for you Islam as your religion”

Al-Ma'idah, 3

This signifies the importance of Islam, as it is not a man made religion; unlike others; It is revealed by Allah, and a great favor upon mankind. As Dr. Hamidullah:

states that:

“Islam is ^{a monotheistic religion} revealed by Allah through Quran; on Prophet Mohammed (PBUH)”

Another distinctive aspect of Islam is the status of 'Deen' has been given to it; owing to its vast impacts on every aspect of humans.

As Allah - The Almighty mentions in Quran:

“ إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ ”

“ Truly, Islam is the only Deen in the sight of Allah ” Al-Imran, 19

Thus, Islam is a perfect religion; by Allah - Al-Khaliq - The Perfect Creator; For His Creation.

→ Salient Features of Islam:

Following are the distinctive features of Islam; obliged for the believers to have firm faith in.

1) Tawheed:

As seed is to tree, Tawheed is to Islam. It is the most fundamental structure of Islam; signifying the oneness of God.

“ قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ”

“ Allah is One ”

Al-Ikhas,

Allah Almighty mentions in Quran that He is the only God; It is the essence of concept of Tawheed; a believer giving Shehada of oneness of God.

As Molana Shibli Naumeni in his book Seerat un Nabi writes that

Prophet Mohammed (Pbuh) says
 "Islam is like a Fort, and the
 gate of this Fort is Tawheed"

This implies that one cannot enter
 into Islam without having faith in
 One God - Allah Almighty.

But Tawheed does not only mean
 one God, rather it means oneness
 of God in every aspect of life.

As Allah Almighty mentions in Quran:

"All that is in heavens and
 in Earths belongs to Allah;
 and He is in perfect control
 of everything; So focus your
 attention & trust on Him alone"

Al-Imran, 189

The ayah signifies that Allah alone
 is the creator and sustainer of the
 universe and no one can be equated
 to Him; as He is in control. As Allah
 Almighty mentions in another ayah in Quran:

"وَإِلَهُكُمْ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا
 هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ"

"Truly, your God is one God;
 There is no God but He; The
 Ever Living, The Most Merciful"

Al-Baqrah, 163

2) Prophethood:

To believe in the messengers
 of Allah and most importantly in
 the finality of Prophethood is yet

another feature of Islam. Allah Almighty has revealed Islam through Quran on the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH); who is the last Prophet of Allah. Whatever has been explained in Quran, Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) has practically performed it, so that we can follow him and lead our lives in accordance with Sunnah. As Allah Almighty mentions in Quran:

“Mohammed is not father of any of your men; but messenger and last prophet of Allah; & Allah is knowing of everything”

AL-Ahzab, 40

As Deen-e-Islam is for all mankind; so is the messenger of Allah; Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) mentions in Hadith:

“وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ”

“I have been sent on earth as mercy for all mankind”

This implies that Sunnah of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) provides guidance in every aspect of life; practically; for all mankind. The importance of following Sunnah is mentioned by Allah in words:

“Say (O Mohammed) if you should love me Allah; then follow me; Allah will love you and forgive you your sins”

Al-Imran 31

3) Pillars of Islam:

To have faith in the five pillars of Islam has made obligatory for believers.

i) Kalima:

The gate to enter in Islam is confessing that Allah is One & that Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) is the messenger of Allah.

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُولُ اللَّهِ

This is the essence of faith of a believer, without which one cannot be called as a Muslim.

ii) Prayer:

To stand in supplication before Allah five times a day has made obligatory for believers. As Allah mentions in A'raaf:

“Believers; who do righteous things; establish prayer and give charity; their reward lies with Allah; they will not fear; nor will they have any regret”

Al-Baqrah, 277

The importance of نماز can be understood by the Hadith of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH):

“Prayer is the only distinction; between a believer and a disbeliever”

iii) Fasting:

To fast on the Holy month of Ramadan; It is also called as charity of body. It is mentioned in Quran; Allah says

“O believers, Fasting is prescribed for you; as it was prescribed for people before you; so that you ^{can} be mindful of Allah”

Al-Baqarah, 183

iv) Charity:

It is stated as biggest financial worship. The concept of giving charity is of very importance in Islam; as it is the way of circulation of ~~the~~ wealth in the society; from wealthy to poor. That is why it is obligatory for the Muslim unless to 'Collect Zakat by force'.

v) Pilgrimage:

To visit Holy Kaaba, for physically and financially fit person is obligatory; once in a life-time.

4) Complete Code of Life:

Islam is not a religion for particular group of people rather it is for all mankind, irrespective of any discrimination. As for Allah, appearance

of a person does not matter.
Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) says:

“An Arab is no way greeter than a non Arab; and a non Arab is no way greeter than an Arab.”

Similarly, Islam is not confined to a particular time or particular aspect of life; rather it provides guidance, from one generation to another, in all aspects of life. It comprehensively guides about rights and responsibilities, as in Health Prophet Mohammed (PBUH)

says:

“Seeking knowledge is obligatory for all men and women.”

As Islam promote social equality and cooperation, so it also provides relevant guidance on community level as well regarding social, financial, economic and political systems of a society.

That means from cradle till grave, Islam is the only deen which provides ultimate guidelines to live a successful and prosperous life.

5. Islam and Humanity:

Islam laid the foundation stone of human rights charter. From humans; to animals; to environment; It comprehensively guides about their respective rights. Islam is the

first religion which discourages racism; as Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) says:

“Allah does not look upon your looks ~~and~~; rather He looks at your heart”

This signifies that discrimination on the basis of cast, color & class is something Islam discourages & that having a good ~~and~~ heart is more beautiful and beloved to Allah than mere looks. (PBUH)

Similarly messengers of Allah also said to be kind towards enemies.

On another account, protection of environment is also made mandatory for believers. As Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) says:

“Do not waste a single drop of water; even if you are sitting beside a running stream”

vii) The day of judgment: ^{in the hereafter &} to believe that on the day of judgment Allah Almighty will decide how people have spent their lives, on the basis of deeds and their actions in this world. As Allah mention in Quran:

“مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ”

“Allah is the owner of day of Deen (day of judgment)”

Al-Fatihah, 3