

Concept of Islam

Introduction:

The word Islam means submission and peace. Only by submitting to the will of Allah, one can attain true peace. Islam refers to the monotheistic religion revealed to the last Prophet, Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) between 610 and 632 of the Common Era. Islam today, is the world's fastest growing religion. 1.2 Billion Muslims, around the globe that makes up almost one quarter of the world's population. The basic teachings of Islam includes to belief in the unity of God, Prophets and the divine books and the life hereafter.

Literal Meaning of Islam:

The word Islam is derived from the Arabic word SLM (سلم), pronounced as 'salm' which means to surrender, to submit and peace. Islam was first used by Allah in Quran.

Contextual meaning of Islam:

Voluntarily submission of one's desires to the will of Allah is the basic meaning of Islam. Islam also means 'peace' which is mentioned in Sayeed Ameer Ali's book "The Spirit of Islam". To enter peace by submitting to the will of Allah is called Islam. The Quran says:

“إِلَّا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ”
“Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest.”

(13: 28)

This ayat signifies that real peace of mind and body can only be achieved through submission and obedience to Allah. Islam

Islam in the light of Shari'ah:

"Submission means that you should bear witness that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is God's messenger." (Hadith)

From this hadith, we can clearly understand the summary of the Islam. Allah has sent different prophets for the guidance of mankind. The prophets preached the message of Allah; the ^{true} path. But man not only veered away from the right path again and again, but also distorted the teachings of Prophets. That was why other Prophets were sent to re-state the original message and guide man to the right path. The last of these prophets was Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH). To him were sent, God's guidance in full form, which is now known as "Islam" preserved in last Holy book "Quran". This is evident from the ayat:

"Muhammad (PBUH) is not the Father of any of your men, but he is the seal of the Prophets. And Allah has full knowledge of all things."
(33:40)

The basic teachings of Islam:

The main basis upon which Islamic life is founded upon includes:

i- Testimony of Faith:

A person becomes a Muslim by saying the testimony of faith (Shahada) with conviction and understanding of its meaning. That is:

"I bear witness that there is no God but Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah."

By believing in and professing faith in the unity of God and the Prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH), a person enters the fold of Islam.

a) Unity of God (Tawhid) in Islam:

Believe in the unity of God (Tawhid) is the fundamental concept of Islam. It means that the whole universe is created by Allah Almighty. He is the sole creator. He has no partners. He is omnipotent, Omnipresent and the sustainer of the world. Allah says in the Quran:

"Say: He is Allah, the One. Allah is He on whom all depend."
(112: 1-2)

A number of attributes are found in Quran to describe God. These include the Most merciful, the most forgiving, the most High, the Unique and the Everlasting, among others.

b) Muhammad (PBUH) is the messenger of Allah:

The second part of the kalimah emphasizes that Allah has sent different prophets for the guidance of

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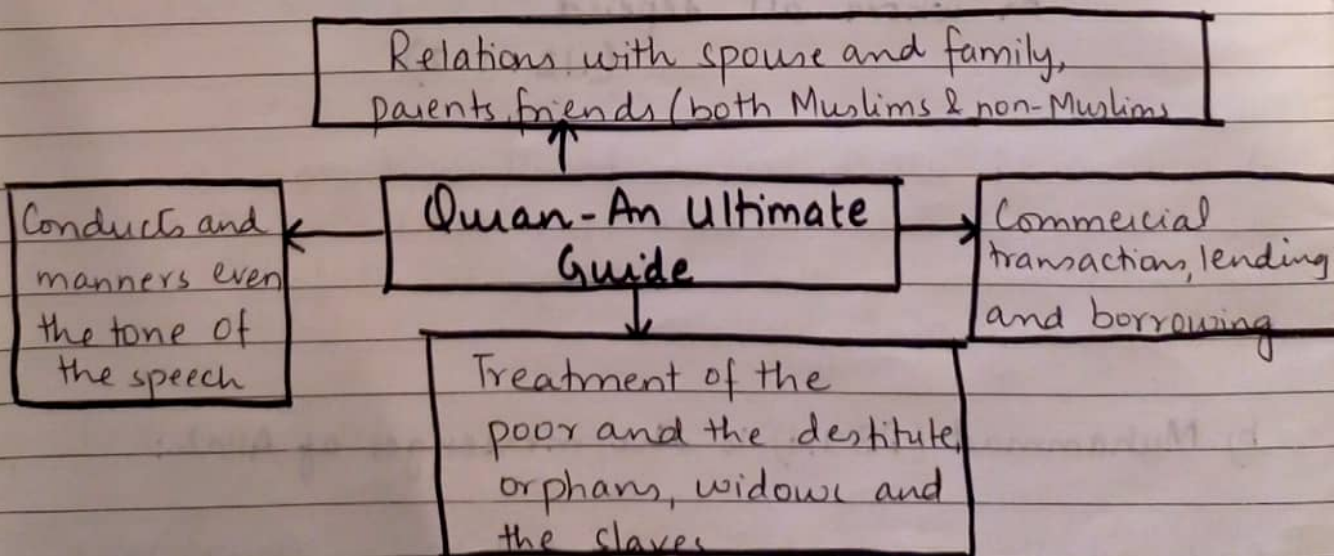
mankind, with Muhammad (PBUH) being the last prophet. All the prophets are representatives of Allah and their lives are role models for mankind. Every prophet said:

"I am to you God's apostle, worthy of all trust. So be committed to God, fear him, and obey me."

Muhammad (PBUH) is the final model for mankind. It is obligatory for every Muslim (male or female) to follow his way of life (sunnah). He is an ultimate source of guidance in every sphere of life.

c) Quran - the book of Guidance:

Holy Quran is the last revealed book of Allah which forms the holy or religious scripture of Islam. It was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in parts, in a span of twenty two and half years between 610 AD to 632 AD. The first revelation was made on 27th of Ramadan. The Quran is a book of principles, directions, commands, warnings and advice:



The principle basis on which the Islamic system is founded are:

- a) A belief in the unity, immateriality, power, mercy and supreme love of the creator
- b) Charity and brotherhood among the mankind
- c) Subjugation of the passions
- d) The outpouring of a grateful heart to the Giver
- e) Accountability for humans actions in another existence.

Exposition of Religion of Islam:

Ahmad A. Galwash in his book "The Religion of Islam" summarizes the concept of Islam as under: -

"The word Islam which literally signifies resignation (to God's will) is a comprehensive name commonly applied to the religion of the followers of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) which God has established for the guidance of his people, both for the worship of their Lord, and for the duties of life."

These sections are five in number:

- i- Beliefs
- ii- Practical devotions
- iii- Transactions
- iv- Moralities
- v- Punishments

a) Beliefs : Five Articles of Faith

The basic articles of faith are Belief in the Oneness of God, Belief in the Prophets, Belief in the Angels, Belief in the Books and in the

Day of Judgment.

b) Practical Devotions/Worships:

They are five in number. Testimony of faith, Prayer, Zakat, Fasting in the month of Ramadan and Hajj.

c) Transactions:

Transactions are duties that are required between man and man. They are divided into:

- i- Contracts
- ii- Nuptials
- iii- Securities

Almost all the various sections of civil jurisprudence relating to barter, sale, agency, larceny, marriage, divorce, dower, partnership, claims etc., are embraced under those three heads.

d) Moralities:

Moral ethics, mentioned in the Quran and the teachings of Holy Prophet (PBUH) such as sincerity, humility, resignation, contentment, patience, love to God and man are all included.

d) Punishments:

Punishments include penalties exacted for lynching, theft, fornication and adultery, slander and inebriation. All these misdeeds are different punishments.

Conclusion:

A person becomes a Muslim by reciting kalimah, reading it through the tongue and believing it with the heart. A Muslim has some responsibilities, that he must fulfill. By doing good deeds and refraining from bad deeds, can only a Muslim find solace in this world and the hereafter.