

Q = What is Islam? Enlist the Salient features of Islam.

Ans= Islam stands for an act of resignation to the will of God. ~~It is~~ and the one who submits himself is known as Muslim. A Muslim has to believe in the Oneness of Allah, the finality of Prophethood and the Last Day. Islam is the only religion which guides man in all walks of his life and it is the true religion professed by all the prophets of Allah, from Adam (AS) to Muhammad (PBUH). For the existence of humans, there are two basic needs that have to be fulfilled; One is the material needs and the other include spiritual needs. To fulfill material needs, Allah has put all nature at man's disposal and, on the other hand, he has sent his Messengers on Earth for fulfilling spiritual needs. Thus, Allah has not left any aspect of life without guidance.

What is Islam?

Literal Meaning of Islam:

Islam is an Arabic word and it was first used in the Quran. The older name of Islam was Deen-e-~~Ha~~ Haneefa, which means the "Deen which leads to the straight path". The word 'Islam'

comes from the root words SLM (س ل م), pronounced as 'salm', and every word having its roots in SLM means peace. Hence, Islam is the religion of peace. Another meaning of Islam is to submit and to surrender, and the one who surrenders himself and submits his desires for the will of Allah is known as a Muslim.

Contextual Meaning of Islam:

Contextually, Islam has two meanings. One is to enter into peace by submitting to the will of Allah. Everything that Allah has ordered us to follow leads ultimately to peace. For example, Allah has ordered men to do jihad against the evil, which is meant to eradicate terrorism, and hence, create peace in the society. The other contextual meaning of Islam is to submit one's desires for the will of Allah, which is the most difficult thing because everyone wants to spend money, wear dresses, eat, drink and spend his time as he wishes but a Muslim is the one whose wishes are directed by God's will.

Islam According to Shariah:

According to Shariah, Islam means to 'voluntarily' submit oneself to the will of the Divine, the Allah.

Islam has guided men towards the right path and afterwards, it has given them the choice to follow the one which they like. Islam do not compel anyone in this regard, it ^{has} explained the pros and cons for both paths and has let men to decide for themselves. As mentioned in Quran,

لا إكراه في الدين (البقرة)

“There is no compulsion in the choice of religion.”

Similarly, Allah has mentioned in verse 6 of Surah al-Kafiroon that:

لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ الدِّينِ
“For you, your religion; and for me, my way of life.”

Allah revealed this verse when the non-believers were threatened that Islam will abrogate their religion, so Allah assured them that everyone has ~~his~~ free will to choose his religion.

Definitions by Scholars:

Prophet (PBUH), the greatest of scholars of mankind, explained Islam with reference to two things. In

context to the Hadith-e-Jibrael, he explained that Islam ~~is~~ ~~to~~ means to bear witness on the Oneness of Allah and the finality of the prophet (PBUH), as mentioned in the Kalimah-e-Shahadat, and to ~~pre~~ perform all the religious obligations, which include prayer, zakat, fasting, etc.

Similarly, many other scholars have described Islam, in more or less, the same ways. Dr. Hamid Khan defines that Islam is a monotheist religion that has been revealed to us through the Last messenger.

Another prominent scholar Sayed Ameer, in his book 'The spirit of Islam', explains that Islam is composed of two things. one is to be tranquil and at peace, and the other is to submit to the one ~~with~~ with whom all peace is made.

Islam Comprises of Faith, Action and Realisation:

Islam requires a harmonious relation between faith, action and realization for a Muslim. Faith (iman) means to believe in the One, the Creator. Action (amal) is the manifestation of our belief ~~in~~ in Allah, in the form of the acts of worship such as prayer and zakat. Realization (ihsan) mean to realise one's relation with Allah. Prophet (PBUH) said:

“Worship Allah as if you see Him;
He sees you although you cannot
see Him.”

Hence, a Muslim creates harmony between the
faith, actions and realization.

Salient Features of Islam

- Islamic Concept of Tawheed:

Tawheed is the
pillar of Islam and the first part of
Kalimah (الله). For a person to be a
Muslim, he has to believe in the oneness of
Allah. It means to believe that there is
one Lord, who is the Supreme. Allah
mentioned in Surah Iklas:

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ۝ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ ۝ لَمْ يَلِدْ ۝ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ ۝
وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ ۝

“Say: Allah is One, the Eternal,
Absolute. He begetteth not, nor is
he begotten. And there is none like
unto him.”

Tawheed provides the basis of
Islam and an insight in all aspects of
life, be it individual or collective.

As mentioned by Allama Shibli in his book Sirat-tun-Nabi, a Hadith of Prophet (PBUH) says that:

“Islam is a fort and the gate to that fort is Tawheed.”

2 - Islamic concept of Prophethood:

It is mentioned in the second part of Kalimah Tayyiba, Allah has ~~not~~ bestowed upon man, his Divine Commandment and ~~then~~ sent the Messengers for interpretation of those commandments; and This is a Muslim's staunch belief, that all the prophets are representatives of mankind and the role models for all of us. As prophet (PBUH) said:

“Verily, I have been sent as a preacher to mankind.”

A Muslim's faith is incomplete if he does not believe on the finality of the prophet (PBUH), which is the distinctive feature of Islam. Allah revealed in Quran:

“Muhammad is not the father of any one of your men, but (he is) the messenger and the seal to prophethood.”

Islamic belief of prophethood provides completion of iman and following the ~~guidance~~ footsteps of Prophet (PBUH) is the ensurance to a meaningful life and success in the hereafter.

3 - Islam is a Complete code of Life.

Islam encompasses every aspect of man's life, begining from birth, to character development, ~~and~~ in individual as well as collective spheres, about this world and the Hereafter. It has not left any field of man's life to be played by satanic forces. For personal life, Islams has set before us, some golden principles. ~~As mentioned in Qur'an~~
As Prophet (PBUH) said:

"Seeking knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim (men and women)."

It clearly explains that education is a compulsive task for every Muslims. Additionally, Islam has also ~~not~~ stressed upon living as a union and to care for other humans as we are oliged to fulfil their rights. Prophet (PBUH) said that:

"Everyone of you is the keeper or a shepherd and will be questioned about the well-being of his fold."

Hence, Islam is an all-embracing religion, which distinguishes it from other religions.

4- Simplicity, Rationality and Practicality:

Islam is a simple, rational and practical religion. Its teachings and beliefs are simple and straightforward. Everyone has access to the Holy Book and hence anyone can read and follow the Divine injunctions. Islam encourages man to reason and think about the working of the universe.

“Those who do not observe and understand are worse than a cattle.” Al-Quran

Islam is also a practical religion as there are no superstitions and futile theories and can be practiced by all. In context to a Hadith:

“God does not accept any ^{belief} ~~deeds~~, if it is not expressed in deeds; and do not accept any deed, if it does not conform to beliefs.”

5- Universality and Humanism in Islam:

Islam is the universal religion, which is not bound to colour, creed or race. Neither it is

restricted to a specific time, region or place.
Prophet (PBUH) removed any distinction, in
this regard, during his last sermon:

“All mankind is from Adam and Eve,
an Arab has no superiority over a
non-Arab, nor a non-Arab an any
superiority over an Arab; a black
has no superiority over a white, nor
a white has any superiority over
a black, except for Piety (taqwa).”

Islam gives the concept of humanity;
which is believed to be the basics of
all religions. Islam emphasises on being kind
to all humans, animals and the nature.
As prophet (PBUH) said:

الرحمة من في الارض يرحمكم من في السماء

“Have mercy on those who are on
earth, the One in the Heavens
will have mercy on you.”

~~not only this, Islam is the religion which~~
conclusion

Islam is the religion which creates a balance
in all aspects of life and allows humans to
follow the abstemious path. It is the only
religion which is complete in itself and

fits for people of all the ages. A ~~Muslim~~
It enjoins man to believe on the Oneness
of the Omniscient, the Omnipresent; on all
the prophets without any distinction and
on the finality of the Prophet (PBUH). It
requires a man to act righteously,
according to the Divine injunctions and
voluntarily follow all the commandments of
Allah.