

→ CONCEPT OF ISLAM:

Origin - literal meaning:-

Islam is ^{an} Arabic word, derived from word "SLM" which means peace, from which come word "aslama" meaning he submitted or he resigned himself.

Contextual meaning:-

Islam is religion which brings peace to mankind when man submits himself to God or to enter in peace by submitting to will of Allah. According to Holy Book revealed to Muhammad (P.B.U.H), this is the only true religion professed by all prophets from Adam to last Prophet (P.B.U.H). A Muslim, is thus the one who believes in all prophets and makes no distinction between them and also believes God has sent His prophets to preach the same religion.

According to Shariah:-

True teachings of Islam tells that man should submit himself voluntarily, as stated:

" لا إكراه في الدين "

(Al: Quran - there is no compulsion in the religion)

" لك دينكم ولى الدين "

(Al: Quran - For you is your religion, for us is our religion)

This clearly depicts that after true teachings are preached in the world and truth is distinguished from false. Person should enter in peace with his own will otherwise Islam don't allow any compulsion in its acceptance. Thus, Islam gives freedom of choice as to whether or not he adopts and ^{one who} chooses to follow religion becomes "Muslim" and one who refuses to follow it becomes "kafir".

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According to Religious Scholars:

- * Dr. Hameedullah describe Islam as monothiest deen revealed to Prophet (P.B.U.H), in which believing only God - Almighty Allah is worthy of worship and Muhammad (P.B.U.H) is His last messenger.
- * Iman Ghazali explained Islam as combination of ~~hugooq~~ (rights) ~~rights~~ rights of Allah (hugooq-ul-Allah) and rights of people (hugooq-ul-Ibaad). In Islam rights of Allah can be forgiven by God but rights of people can be only be forgiven if they themselves forgive each other, this shows humanity comes first in every aspect of this religion. Thus, Islam protects rights of everyone.
- * Sadar-udin-Islami have deepened the thought of concept from Surahs of Quran, as maki chapters are demonstration of faith and madani chapters shows rituals. Thus, he describes Islam as religion of faith and rituals.

→ SALIENT FEATURES OF ISLAM:

* Bed-rock of Islam - Tawheed:

Tawhid means that there is only one supreme lord of universe. He is omnipotent, omnipresent and sustainer of the world, as stated in Quran:

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

(al-Quran: Say, "He is Allah, One. Allah, the eternal refuge. He neither begets nor is born. Nor is there to Him any equivalent.")

Tawhid is first pillar of Islam, when a man joins the fold of this religion by honestly believing in unity of God and prophethood of Muhammad he enters in peace by submitting himself. Both these beliefs are epitomised in Kalimah

" لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله "

" There is no God but Allah, Muhammad is messenger of Allah "

- ~~Prophecy~~ ^{syllabus}: According to Allama Shibli, Tawhid is first chapter of Islamic ~~scripture~~ (Sirat-un-nabi) and describes Islam as a fort and the gate of that fort is tawhid.

* Prophethood:

The second basic postulate of Islam is to believe in ^{final} Prophethood of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and to believe in him means to believe in his message and to accept the law given by Almighty God.

The guidance is revealed through prophets. It is a part of their mission to translate that into practice, in their own lives and in their society they try to reform. All prophets are representatives of God, but they are human beings and their lives are model for mankind. The code of behaviour, the law which is to decide the rightness or otherwise is given by God through the prophet and is known as Shari'ah. Since the prophets are sacred, ~~prop~~ it was hard to believe that they were amongst ~~human~~ impotent human beings. Instead people ~~of~~ ~~asked~~ claimed why weren't they sent from amongst angels? Answer to this question is given by Almighty Allah in Quran:

وما منع الناس ان يؤمنوا ان جاءهم الهدى الا ان قالوا
 بعث الله بشرا رسولا .

(al-Quran: And what prevented the people from believing when guidance came to them ~~but~~ except that they said, "Eh! Allah sent a human messenger?"

Because prophets were sent in order to set examples in any and every aspect of life. In other words, prophets should be amongst the ones feeling cold and hungry, experiencing difficulties, becoming a father, supporting the house financially. Otherwise, people would have right to say that "they are ~~made~~ created from light; thus they carry out commands of Allah better than us without any difficulties. Thus, believing all prophets as messenger and human representative

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of Allah is basic feature of Islam.

* Day of Judgement :

The world, according to Islam is place of trial and man is being judged in it. He will ~~also~~ be held accountable of all that ~~does~~ he does herein. This world is mortal and one day, will come to end, and after that a new world will be resurrected. On which day, man will be rewarded or punished for his deeds and misdeeds. Those who live in present world a life of obedience to lord will enjoy eternal bliss in hereafter and those who disobey His commands will have to face its bad consequences in the form of "hell". As stated in Quran:

وَأَنذَرُوا يَوْمًا لَا تَجْزِي عَنْ نَفْسٍ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَقْبَلُ مِنْهَا عَسْرًا
وَلَا تَنْفَعُ شَفَاعَةً وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ .

(al: Quran. "And fear a day when no soul will suffice for another soul at all, nor will any intercession benefit it, nor will they be aided.")

On the day of judgment, every soul have to carry their own burden, even a mother will not remember her child. Every soul will be surprised and perplexed by that day.

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* Unity of Matter and Spirit :-

Islam does not believe in asceticism. It does not ask man to avoid things material. Islam aims at establishing an equilibrium between these two aspects of life - the material and the spirit. It says that everything in the world is for man. The world has suffered at the hand of one-sidedness of many religions and ideologies. Some have laid emphasis on spiritual side of life but have ignored its material and mundane aspects. They looked upon the world as an illusion, a deception and a trap. ~~On the~~ ~~other~~ Contrarily, Islam teaches that moral and material powers must be welded together. As mentioned in holy book:

(al-Quran: Say, "Whose order have you denied yourself those amenities which God has created for His people and those good things to eat and use (which He has made for you)"

Thus, ~~Islam~~ spiritual salvation can be achieved by using material resources for the good of man in the service of just ends, and not by living a life of asceticism or by running away from the challenges of life.

* Complete Code of life :-

Islam provides guidance for all walks of life - individual and social, material and moral, economic and political, legal and cultural, national and international. From the birth of child to his upbringing, character building, education and family life, every aspect is considered in its teachings. As mentioned in Quran:

السلامة والعدل والعدل والعدل والعدل
السلامة والعدل .

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(al-Quran: This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed my favour upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion")

Islam is a complete code of life as it is an all-embracing way of life and does not leave out any field of human existence to become a playground for satanic forces.

* Universality and Humanity:

The message of Islam is for the entire human race. God, in Islam, is the God of all the world and Prophet (P.B.U.H) is messenger for whole of mankind. In Islam, all men are equal, whatever be their colour, religion, caste or nationality.

Islam removes all these impediments and proclaims the idea of whole of humanity being one family of God.

As stated by Holy Prophet in his last sermon:

"No Arab is superior than non-Arab nor any non-Arab is better than an Arab."

Islam wants to unite the entire human race under one banner and refuses any idea of discrimination in human race. Indeed, it teaches to be with best character and work for welfare of people as stated of religious scholars - Al-Azhar, Dr. Wasiullah that key feature of Islam is to practice social services.

(Hadith-e-qudsi: Allah shows displeasure who never visits a sick person).

Islam doesn't only protect the rights of humans but also emphasise on animal rights and environmental protection, as demonstrated by ~~hadith~~ "planting a green plant is form of charity".

* Preservation of Record:-

Teachings of Islam have been preserved in their original form and God's guidance is available without adulteration of any kind. There has not been an iota of change in this unique historic record. On contrary, many religions and their teachings have been altered with the passage of time and are not preserved in its original form. These aspects have appealed to hundreds of thousands of people in past and the present and have made them affirm ~~that~~ that Islam is religion of truth and right path for mankind.

* Permanence and Change:-

Too much emphasis on permanence makes the system rigid and robs it of flexibility and progress, while lack of permanent values and unchanging elements generate shapelessness and anarchy. What is needed is a balance between two. Islam presents a ~~strategy~~ ideology which satisfies demands of stability as well as of change.

The Quran and Sunnah contain the eternal guidance given by God which is free from limitations of "space and time". But God has revealed only broad principles and has given freedom to apply them in every age in the way suited to spirit & conditions of that age. It is through "ijtihad" that people of every age try to implement and apply divine guidance to the problems of their times. Thus, the basic guidance is of a permanent nature, while the method of its application can change in accordance with peculiar needs of every age.