

# Assignment Qs.

What is Islam. - Enlist the salient features of Islam.

## Outlines:-

- 1) Introduction
- 2) Meaning and concept of Islam
- 3) Constituent Elements of Islam.
  - a. Tawheed.
  - b. Prophethood
  - c. Life After death.
- 4) Salient features of Islamic Ideology
  - a) Clarity of Ideology
  - b) Rationality & Practicality
  - c) Union of Matter and Spirit
  - d) Balanced Approach to Individuation & Society
  - e) A complete guide to a successful life
  - f) Universality of its message
  - g) Dissemination of Hope.
  - h) Clarity of Life's Purpose
  - i) Adaptability of its message.
  - j) Equality
  - k) Rights & Duties
  - ~~l) Concept of Dual Accountability~~
  - m) Ethics & Morality
  - n) Authenticity of its message
- 5) Critical Assessment

## 1) Introduction:-

Islam is an undubitable reality; one that has been revealed by the Creator of this universe for the ultimate guidance of human race - It embodies the principles of every aspect of human life, that cater to both the material and spiritual requirements of man. But that's not all - The instructions revealed through Quran to the mankind have been enacted clearly in the life of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) who clearly taught us every aspect of human life including social, political, economic & private life - The clarity, finality and universality of Islam (as a Deen) is depicted in the Surat-Al-Maid

"This day, I have perfected your Deen for you, completed my favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your Deen."

## 2) Meaning & Concept of Islam:-

The root letters of Islam is "S, L, M" which stand for peace and submission. In the context of Islam, we say that Islam means "to submit to

These 'sovereign authority of Allah'. This submission and obedience not only means submission in the sense of mode of Ibadat or a set of religious customs, it stands for a total subjugation to the will of Allah in every aspect of human life — be it social, economic, religious or political.

This submission to the sovereignty of Allah serves multiple purposes — On one hand, it frees man from the fear of false idols while on the other hand, it creates equality among the mankind. Additionally, this submission does not damage individual freedom rather it strengthens it by disseminating the message that all are equal as long as they are obedient to Allah (SWT).

Dr. Hamidullah defines Islam as "Monotheist religion revealed through Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

According to Imam Ghazali, Islam is a combination of two things the rights of Allah (Haqq-ul-Allah) & the rights of the people (Haqq-ul-Ibad).

### 3) Constituent Elements of Islam :-

While the concepts and salient features of Islam are numerous and varied (encompassing every aspect of human life here and hereafter), the basic building blocks that are the essence of Islam are tawheed, prophethood and the concept of life after death.

#### a) Tawheed :-

The concept of Tawheed (Oneness of Allah), is the bedrock of Islam. This is the one concept that answers several of our epistemological questions revolving around our creation and that of the universe around us. "Islam is like a fort and the gate of that fort is Tawheed" (Hadith)

#### b) Prophethood (Risalat) :-

The second part of Kalimah "And Muhammad is His Prophet" is the 2nd most important part of Islam. It enjoins that the life of Prophet (PBUH) is to be taken as guide for ultimate success in life and life after death.

#### c) Life After Death :-

This concept is the one that differentiates a believer from a non-believer. It explains that the people who follow the first two concepts of Tawheed & Risalat are the one who have succeeded in the real sense -

They will not only be rewarded here but also in the life after death. This concept of reward and punishment assures a believer that his good deeds will surely be rewarded in the life hereafter, if not in this world. In the Holy Quran, the same is delivered in these words.

"Whoever comes with a good deed, for him there shall be the like of it tenfold, while whoever comes with an ill-deed, he shall be required with only one like it, and they shall not be treated unjustly."

#### 4) Salient features of Islamic Ideology

Islam is the fastest growing religion in many parts of the world but what are the distinctive features that are making it appealing to the masses?

To get an answer, let's have a look at the unique features of Islam.

##### a) Clarity of Ideology:-

The religion Islam is really easy to understand and follow. It contains no mythology or illogical concepts. In the Holy Quran Allah ensures the followers that the Quran has been made easy to understand so that the man may understand & reflect upon it.

## 4b) Rationality & Practicality

The hierarchy of priests and the plethora of interpretation of holy texts that we see in other religions is non-existent in Islam - Everything has been made clear in the Quran and its practical reality has been shown to us through the life of Holy Prophet (PBUH). The orders are clear "Those who believe & act righteously, joy is for them and a blissful home to return to" (13:29)

## c) Union of Matter & Spirit

Islam is against the concept of hermitage - It enjoins the concept of living the worldly life while struggling for the life hereafter. In Surat Al-Ayaraaf, we find injunction like: - **"Eat and Drink, but do not by be Extravagant."**

The concept is clear here; we need to live/indure this life and work for the life hereafter - a lesson that is alien in some religions

## d) Balance between Individuality & Society

After clearing the concept of worldly life, Islam sets clear rules for us to balance our personal life with social life.

Injunction like "for us are our deed and for you yours" (28:55) highlight the concept of individuality. On the other hand, "Cling firmly by means of God's rope, and don't be divided" (3:103), enjoins the concept of social life.

## e) A complete guide to a successful life

Unlike other religions where religion is reduced to the realm of private life (in terms of worships and rituals), Islam is a complete code of conduct - It provides comprehensive instructions about socio-political-religious-economic life of a man - It caters to every human need from cradle to grave -

## f) Universality of Its Message

The message of Islam was not only intended for the people of Arabia, it was intended for the whole mankind - The words of **O' Mankind** and **O' Son of Adam** highlight the fact that the message of Quran is not bound by time, age or region -

## g) Dissemination of Hope

Islam tends to the hearts of poor, destitutes and helpless individuals - It does so by telling them that this world is not an end in itself; there is a life hereafter - It tells them to be patient in the face of hardship for they will be given reward of their good deeds in the life hereafter.

## h) Clarity of Life's Purpose

Another very distinctive feature of Islam is its clarity in defining the

Purpose of human life - In Surat-ul-Bayyinah we find clear instructions like -  
"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion, inclining to truth, and to establish prayer and to give zakah."

### i) Adaptability of Its Message

One of the biggest cause of a societies demise is ~~its~~ their inability of change and adapt - Several religions have also become irrelevant because of the same reason - But Islam ~~is~~ has been successful in keeping pace with changing times -

It has maintained its essence while adapting to the requirements of evolution.

### j) Equality

While societies grapple for dominance with respect to their cast, color and race, Islam ended this crisis hundreds of years ago - The farewell sermon of Holy Prophet (PBUH) is an excellent example of this equality where he declared that no one is superior to another on these worldly merits.

### k) Rights & Duties

Islam lays clear rules for the construction of a harmonious society by appropriating rights and duties to every member of it - We find clear instructions about these right and duties for the creation of a harmonious family system, social system where even the neighbours, animals and plants have certain rights.



## m) Ethics & Morality

The concept of ethics and morality has been specifically highlighted in Islam. No other religious ideology has given so much attention to this concept of character building in mankind. In the words of Holy Prophet (PBUH) :-

"The perfect among the believers are those who are best in character"

## n) Authenticity of Its Message

The revealed message of other religions have been subjected to change in different periods of history but the revealed ideology is unchangeable which adds to its credibility and authenticity. Holy Quran says:-

انا نحن نزلنا الذكر وانا له لحفظون

Indeed, it is We who sent down the Qur'an and indeed, We will be its guardian.

## 5) Critical Assessment :-

George Bernard Shaw in 'The Genuine Islam' is found to note the following :-

"I have always held the religion of Muhammad in high estimation because of its wonderful vitality. It is the only religion which appears to me to possess that assimilating capacity to the

changing phases of existence which can  
make itself appeal to every age - "

The simplicity, authenticity and holistic approach of Islamic ideology are the distinguishing features of Islam. Its balanced approach towards individual and collective life and clear injunctions about human existence are the cornerstone of Islamic system. In short, these are the reasons that make Islam the universal religion for the mankind.