

29818 - Aqsa Irfan - 044

Islam

Its Meaning And Concept

Origin of the Word:

Islam is an Arabic word and its root word is SLM which means 'peace' from which comes the word 'aslama' which means 'he submitted' or 'he surrendered'.

So, the literal meanings of the word Islam are peace, submission and surrender.

Contextual Meaning: When the term is used in a religious context, Al-Islam or Islam is the religion that can be defined as:

“The religion which brings peace to mankind when a man commits himself to God and submits his desires to the will of Allah is called Islam.”

According to Shariah; Voluntary submission of desires to the will of Allah is called Islam.

(2:256)

In the Holy Quran, Allah says:

“There is no compulsion in religion. The Right Way stands clearly distinguished from the wrong. Hence he who rejects the evil ones and believes in Allah has indeed taken hold of the firm, unbreakable handle.”
And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

At another place in the Holy Quran, Allah Almighty distinguishes believers from the disbelievers and commands the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to say:

“لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ”

Translation: For you is your religion, and for me is my religion.

(Surah Kaafirun: 6)

According to Hadith-e-Jibreel (A.S):

Islam is to bear witness that:

- 1- None has the right to be worshipped but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah
- 2- To offer the Salah
- 3- To pay Zakah

4. Fast during the month of Ramadan.

5. To make Hajj if you are able and have the means to make the journey.

Dr. Hamidullah defines Islam as a monotheist deen revealed through the Prophet (PBUH).

One of the great Islamic philosophers, **Imam Ghazali** says that Islam is the aggregate of the Rights of Allah and the rights of people.

The Oxford Dictionary tells three aspects of Islam that are:

- to accept monotheism
- to embrace prophethood
- to practice Muslim culture

In the Holy Quran, Allah says:

« ان الدين الاسلام »

Translation: Truly, the religion with Allah is Islam. (Surah Al-Imran: 19)

The Holy Quran consists of both Makki and Madni Surahs which describe faiths and rituals

respectively that are based on the religion of Islam and any act that is according to the Holy Quran and Sunnah comes under the religions of Islam.

Concept of a True Muslim:

Professor Khurshid Ahmed, in his book *Islam: its meaning and concept*, describes three things that are necessary to be a true Muslim: Faith, Action according to that faith and the realization of one's relation to God as a result of action and obedience.

A Muslim is committed to the values of life given by the Quran and the Sunnah. He tries to live according to the guidance given by Allah and His Prophet and he strives to promote the message of Islam through his words and actions.

Allah says in the Holy Quran:

"Those who believe and those

whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah, indeed it is in the thought of Allah alone that the heart of man really finds rest — those who believe and act righteously, joy is for them and a blissful home to return to.”

(Surah Ar-Ra'id: 28-29)

Basic Concept of Islam:

The basic Islamic concept is that the entire universe was created by God, whom Islam calls Allah and who is the Lord and the Sovereign of the Universe. He is the Lord of the Universe which he alone sustains. He created man and appointed for each human being a fixed period of life which he is to spend upon the Earth. Allah has prescribed a certain code of life as the correct one for him, but has at the same time conferred on man freedom of choice as to whether or not he adopts this code as the

actual basis of his life. One who chooses to follow the code revealed by God becomes a Muslim (believer) and one who refuses to follow it becomes a Kafir (non-believer).

Allah says:

اليوم اكملت لكم دينكم واتممت عليكم نعمتي ورضيت لكم الاسلام ديناً

Translation: Today, I have perfected for you your religion, and have completed My favour unto you, and am well pleased with Islam as your religion.

(AlMaidah, 5:3)

Some Basic Characteristics of Islam.

In his book, The Genuine Islam, George Bernard Shaw is reported to have said; "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

phase of existence which can make itself appeal to every age."

1. Islam guides in every aspect of life:

Islam provides guidance for all aspects of life; individual and social, material and moral, economic and political, legal and cultural, and national and international. Islam is a complete way of life. It is not a religion in the common and distorted sense, for it does not confine its scope to one's private life. It is a complete way of life and is present in every field of human existence.

In Surah Al-Talaq, Allah says:

ومن يتوكل على الله فهو حسبه

Translation: "And whoever places his trust in Allah, He is sufficient for him."

(Al-Burrah-65:3)

This ayah shows that we need Islam at every stage of life.

2. Islam is the Everlasting Religion:

In the history of religion, it is the religions (plural) which are discussed. However, the Holy Quran has never used the term religion in a plural form which indicates that the Almighty God recognizes only one religion and one path to Him and that is Islam.

The stories of the prophets as mentioned in the Quran suggest that the teachings of the previous prophets have been limited to their own time and region. But Islam is the only religion that is everlasting because it is the Din of Prophet (PBUH) who is the last Messenger of Allah Almighty.

It is narrated from the Prophet (PBUH) to have said;

"The parable of my mission and the mission of the previous prophets is the parable of a man constructing a building until he makes it

as complete and beautiful as possible.
Then people walk around it and
say, "we have never seen such a
beautiful building except that there
is a brick (part) missing in it."
So, I am that brick."

(Sahih Muslim)

This means that the message is delivered and the Din Islam is complete and no other religion and no other prophet will come till qayamah.

3- Islam is for the whole of mankind.

In the teachings of Islam, all the needs of humanity have been taken into account, and sufficient and perfect instructions have been given in each case. It is a living religion which provides vitality to mankind and is a bright and clear path to salvation in the life to come. Allah addresses the Quran to the entirety of mankind, inviting His creatures and servants to obey and to respond

to his prophet and to live together like one family.

Allah addresses the mankind in Quran by saying يا أيها الناس which means "O, mankind", these words indicate that Allah addresses the whole mankind on the earth.

Allah says in ^{the} Holy Quran.

يا أيها الناس اتقوا ربكم الذي خلق من نفس
وحدة وخلق منها زوجها وبث منهما رجالا كثيرا ونساء

Translation: "O mankind, fear your Lord who created you from soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women."

(Surah An-Nisa: 1)

It could be understood from this verse that the whole of mankind belongs to one pair of parents, the perennial Adam and Eve. That is the common origin of the entire human race. Thus, He is the Creator and we constitute one family.

At one more place in the Holy

Quran; Allah says:

Whosoever kills an innocent human being, it shall be as if he has killed all mankind, and whosoever saves the life of one, it shall be as if he had saved the life of all mankind.

(Surah Ma'idah: 32)

4- Islam is not for a specific ethnicity:

Many religions specially Judaism and Brahmanism do not believe in conversion from one faith to another. But Islam is the religion which has its doors openend to all the mankind.

According to The New York Times, an estimated 25% of American Muslims are converts. In Britain, around 6000 people convert to Islam per year.

According to a June 2000 article in the British Muslims Monthly Survey, the majority of new Muslim converts in Britain were women.

According to The Huffington Post,
observers estimate that as many as
20000 Americans convert to Islam annually.

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) says:

"Every child is born with
a true faith of Islam and
his parents convert him to
Judaism or Christianity or
Magianism, as an animal de-
livers a perfect baby animal.

Do you find it mutilated?"

(Sahih Bukhari: 1385)

Conclusion:

In conclusion, it is the
duty of a Muslim not only to
follow the Divine law in his
daily behaviour in his life but
also he is to contribute according
to his capacities and possibilities to
the propagation of Islam which is
based on Divine revelation and in-
tended for the well being of all as
Yann Martel, in his book; Life of
Pi writes:

"I challenge anyone to understand Islam, its spirit and not to love it. It is a beautiful religion of brotherhood and devotion."

(Yann Martel)