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## What is Islam?

### Introduction (Meaning of Islam)

The word Islam, an Arabic word which denotes submission, surrender, and pure obedience of Allah. The literal meaning of the word is 'peace' which signifies the most vital aspect of the Islamic religion that a person can achieve the true tranquility of both heart and mind only through his obedience of one God who is Omnipotent, Omnipresent and the Sustainer of the universe. Such a life with obedience can also help in the establishment of peace and harmony among the members of the society.

As Quran says:

'Mankind is a single nation. So Allah raised Prophets as bearers of good news and as warners, and He revealed with them the book with truth, that it might judge between people concerning that in which they differed. And none but the very person who ever given it, differed about it after clear arguments had come to them, envying one another, So Allah has guided by His will those who believe to the truth about which they differed. And Allah guides whom he pleases to the right place.' [2:213]

According to the Quran

“Those who believe and whose heart 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.”

This message was preached by all the prophets of Allah, who showed men the right way of life. But man veered away from this path again and again and also distorted the code of guidance which prophets had bequeathed. That is why others prophets were sent to restate the original message and guide man to the right path. The last of those prophets was Muhammad (S.A.W) who presented God's guidance in its final form and arranged to preserve it for all the time. It is this guidance which is known as 'Al-Islam' and is enshrined in the Quran and is the life example of Prophet (S.A.W)

## Concept of Islam

Islam is the embodiment of code of life which God, the Creator and Lord of the universe has revealed for the guidance of mankind. All of its teachings are harmoniously conceived and to compliment each other, nothing is superfluous and nothing is lacking. With the result of solid composure and absolute balance its teachings and postulates both create a strong and long

Lasting impression on both ~~believers~~ <sup>believers</sup> and non believers. It is a religion which purely provides guidance for each and every aspect of mankind and the universe.

Man requires two significant things for the proper development of his existence. He requires resources to maintain life and fulfill the needs of both the individual and the society. Secondly, he must attain the knowledge regarding the principles of individual and social behaviour which enables him to maintain justice and tranquility in human life. The Lord of the universe and provided for both of these ~~to~~ in full measure. In order to cater for the individual needs of man God has provided nature with all kinds of resources which lie at the disposal of man. To provide for his spiritual, social and cultural needs He has raised His prophets from among men and revealed to them the code of life which can guide man's steps to the right path. This code of life is known as Islam, the religion preached by all the prophets of God.

According to the Holy Quran:  
"He has obtained for you (O Muhammad) that faith which He commended to Noah and that which he commended to Abraham, Moses and Jesus saying, "Establish the faith and be not divided therein".

Thus all the Prophets were the messengers from God who have been revealed the real truth regarding the existence of this universe and who were assigned the task to guide men to the right path. All of them gave the same message and all of them stood for the same cause, Islam.

“O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messengers and make not your deeds vain”.

## Basic Concept

Basic Islamic concept is based on Tauheed and the belief that Muhammad (s.a.w) is the last prophet sent by God as a messenger to guide and teach the mankind to the right path.

The belief of Tauheed is a revolutionary concept and constitutes the essence of the teachings of Islam. It means that there is only One Supreme Lord of the universe who is the sustainer of mankind. His presence and governness can be felt if we observe the scattered stars in the infinite space, the harmony of seasons, the vast panorama of nature with its charm and beauty all point towards one fact that this system of universe is being governed by only one God who has created all of the things around us.

~~Truly stated in the Quran:~~

Truly stated in the Quran:  
Surah Ikhlas — "He is Allah, the One & Unique;  
Allah, who is in need of none and of  
whom all are in need; He neither begot  
any nor was He begotten" (112:1-4)

The second part of the Islamic belief signifies  
that God has not left any man without  
any guidance for the conduct of his life.  
He has made revelations to his prophets  
who further became apostles of God and  
guided men towards the teachings of  
Allah. The Quran said:

"Every Messenger who was sent by Us was  
sent for the purpose that he should be obeyed  
under the sanction of Allah".

The third and very significant postulate of the  
Islamic concept is the belief in the life hereafter.

World according to Islam is a place of trial and  
man is accountable for whatever deeds he  
performs in this world. It will be in life after  
death that man will be rewarded or punished  
for his deeds and misdeeds. Those who live  
in the present world a life in complete obedience  
to God will enjoy eternal bliss and those who  
disobey his commands will have to suffer for  
his misdeeds in the life of eternity.

# Characteristics of Islamic Ideology

## ① Islamic Concept of Tawheed

Tawheed, an arabic word; meaning "unification of God in Islam", also romanized as Tawheed. The indivisible unification concept of monotheism in Islam. As the seed is to tree, so is tawheed to Islam. Just as the tree is a wonderfully developed extension of the seed, so is the religious system of Islam a multi-faceted expression of a single basic concept. For, monotheism in Islam does not mean simply belief in one God, but in God's oneness in all respects. No one shares in this oneness of God.

Kalima Tayyab

'There is none worth of worship except God and Muhammad is the messenger of God.'

First part of Kalima describes the Oneness of Allah. Concept of tawheed, has existed since the beginning of human life on this earth. The firstman - Adam - was the first messenger of God. It was this first messenger who taught human beings the concept of tawheed.

## ② Prophethood

Prophethood is an essential need for people.

In Islam, prophethood has been given such a special status and significance, and it gives a great impact on man's life. The position of the prophets cannot be acquired by effort, spiritual exercise or religious meditation. Prophets were chosen by Allah.

Prophethood or nubuwwah refers to God's primary means of communicating with humankind, involving a long and continuous chain of Revelation. The second part of Kalma tells Muslims to ~~believe~~ believe in the prophethood and Holy Prophet (S.A.W) is the last prophet of Allah.

Kalma Tayyab

‘There is none worthy of worship except God and Muhammad is the messenger of God?’

Quran presents belief in prophethood as a corollary of belief in God, providing a means by which humans can respond individually and collectively to God. The prophet is a witness of God's unity, announces the righteous conduct God wills for this world, and warns of God's judgment on the Last day.

Surah Azab (33:40) — ‘Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the messenger of Allah and the seal of Prophets.’

### ③ Simplicity

Islam as a religion is simple as it is free from superstitions and irrational beliefs. The unity of God, the Prophethood of Muhammad (S.A.W) and the concept of life after death are the basic articles of this faith. All the teachings of Islam follow from these three articles and are based on sound logic and reason. In Islam there is no hierarchy of priests, no far fetched abstractions, no complicated rites and rituals and everybody can translate the book of God and dictates it into practice.

Allah's Messenger (S.A.W) said:

"Simplicity is from eeman (faith)".

### ④ Rationalism

Islam enjoys man to see things in the light of reality. It teaches man to use his intellect and observe as well understand the real meanings of the presence of the things around him.

The prophet of Islam said:

"He who leaves his home in the search of some knowledge walks in the path of God".

Quran advised may be pray, "O, my Lord! Advance me in knowledge"

Muhammad (S.A.W) also stressed regarding the attainment of knowledge in the following words,

"To seek knowledge is obligatory for mankind".



Islam appreciates the intellectual activities of man to such a degree as to place him above the angels. No other religion went ever so far in asserting the dominance of reason and of learning above all other manifestations of life. As Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) also asserted in the following words;

"If anybody goes on his way in search of knowledge, God will make easy to him the way to Paradise."

Thus from the above mentioned hadith's it can be vividly understood that Islam as a religion teaches rational approach towards life.

#### ④ Practical

Islam, as a religion is not based on empty or futile theories. Infact it intensely educates in attaining a practical approach towards one's existence both as an individual and as a social being. It says that Islam is not a mere profession of beliefs, it is the essence of life. It is a religion which is something to be lived and not an object of mere lip service. Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) said in this regard:

"God does not accept belief, if it is not expressed in deeds, and does not accept deeds, if they do not conform to belief".

Material prosperity in Islam is desirable, though not the goal in itself. The goal of all our practical activities always should be the creation and maintenance of both personal and social conditions which can be helpful in the development of a moral stamina in man. In other words, Islam leads man towards a consciousness of moral responsibility by his adoption of practicality in his life.

### ⑤ Unity between Matter and Spirit

One of the unique characteristics of Islam is that it does not divide life in water tight compartments of matter and spirit. It is against asceticism and believes in the achievement of spiritual elevation by living piously in this world with a complete sense of virtue and morality instead of renouncing the world. Every individual muslim has to regard himself as personally responsible for all the happenings around him and to strive for the establishment of right and abolition of wrong at every time and every ~~direction~~ direction. A sanction for this attitude can be found in the verses of Quran, "You are the best community that has been sent forth unto mankind: You enjoy the Right and forbid the wrong and you have faith in God".

Islam stresses again and again in the attainment of moderation and decency in all walks of life.

Holy Prophet said that:

'A muslim who lives in the midst of the society and bears with patience and afflictions that come to him is better than the one who shuns society and cannot bear any wrong done to him?'

~~Islam as a religion has a wide horizon and a~~  
~~scope. It is not only~~

Islam enjoins man to devote all his energies to the reconstruction of life on healthy and moral foundations. It teaches that both moral and material resources for the betterment of man in the service of just ends instead of running away from the challenges of life. An establishment of a equilibrium is strongly desired by the religion of Islam between both the material and spiritual aspects of life.

### ⑥ Complete way of life

Islam as a religion has a wide horizon and a scope. It is not only restricted to the private matters and affairs concerning an individual rather it deals with all the fields of human existence. It carries within its teachings a complete guidance concerning the individual and social, materials and moral, economic and political, legal and cultural, national and international.

It also clearly states that its objectives are the purification of the soul and the reformation of the society.  
As Quran says:

'We verily sent our messengers with clear proofs and revealed with them the scripture and the Balance, that mankind may observe justice and the right measure?'

Islam is a complete way of life as it integrates man with God, awakens in him a new moral consciousness and invites him to deal with all problems of life in complete accordance with his commitment to God.

## ⑥ Universality and Humanism

God in Islam is the God of all the world. Islam there is no distinction on the basis of color, creed, language or nationality. All men are equal in the eyes of Islam and it insists in the removal of all the impediments on the basis of status, wealth and social status.

'O Lord! Lord of my life and of everything in the universe! I affirm that all human beings are brothers to one another?'

Islam wants to unite all the human race under one code of life and presents a message of hope and a glorious future for its followers.

According to Holy Prophet (S.A.W).

• Respect God and be affectionate to the family of God?

Islam leads man to a unification of all aspects of life. It's a universal religion which stresses on the equality of all human beings with basic equal rights for all. It is a dynamic belief and a revolutionary doctrine. It means that all men are the creatures of one God. Discrimination based on colour, class, race or territory is unfounded and illusionary. It is remnant of the days of ignorance which chained men down to servitude. Humanity is one single family of God and there can be no sanction for those barriers. Men are one and gives a revolutionary concept of the unity of mankind.