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What is Islam and elaborate the salient features of Islam.

Islam:

Islam is a monotheist religion revealed upon Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH). The word Islam literally means to surrender and to submit. Contextually Islam means to submit oneself to the will of God. The definition of Islam given by Shariah clarifies its meaning a bit more by providing that the submission of one's desires to the will of Allah is a voluntary one. The word Islam has been derived from a three letter word S, L, M which means peace. The peace Islam talks about is just not the inner peace of an individual but also the peace Islam tends to bring among individuals within the society. Allah says in Quran.

”إلا في ذكر الله تنال السلب“

Surely in the remembrance of Allah hearts do find satisfaction”

Islam is a unique religion

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Consisting distinct features that beautifies Islam even more.

Salient features of Islam

Islam is a universal "din" being much more than just a religion. This universality is shown in its salient features, some ^{of them} are described as follows:-

1. Tawhid as a core of Islam:

Tawhid talks about the oneness of Allah, it is the foundation of Islam explained in Surah Ikhlas the 112th chapter of Quran. The crux of this Surah is that "Allah is one, he is eternal, he is not born and no one is born from him, and none is comparable to him".

Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) has said that "Islam is a fort and its gate is Tawhid" as recorded by Allama Shibli Naumani in his book Sirat un Nabi.

2. Prophethood:

Prophethood is an important element of Islam without which the faith remains incomplete. Believing in the prophets sent by Allah from Adam (PBUH) till Muhammad (PBUH) is an essential requirement

of Islam. Islam demands the follower to firmly believe in the finality of prophet Muhammad (PBUH). as Allah says in Quran "Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but is the messenger of Allah and seal of the prophets." (Surah Ahzab, verse no. 40)

3. Believing in the tenets of Islam:
Allah (SWT) says in second chapter, verse 285 of the Quran that

"The messenger believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord and so do the believers. They believe in Allah, his angels, his books and his messengers. They say we seek your forgiveness our Lord and to you is the final return"

A muslim firmly believes in

- ⇒ Oneness of Allah.
- ⇒ The existence of angels.
- ⇒ The revelation of books.
- ⇒ Messengers are sent by Allah.
- ⇒ Returning to Allah / day of judgement
- ⇒ Faith in pre-destiny / divine decree.

4. Performance of worships.

Islam requires a believer to performance certain worships. After believing in Allah and his messenger, the establishment of such worships completes the faith. As Umar Ibn Al-Khatab reported that the Prophet said "Islam is to testify there is no God but Allah and Muhammad (PBUH) is his messenger, to establish prayer, to give zakat (charity), to fast the month of Ramadan and to perform the pilgrimage if possible". The observance of such Ibadat constitutes the other half part of believing in Islam as per the abovementioned Hadith.

5. Life after death.

Islam does not only deals with life in this world but it also gives insight of the ~~worldly~~ life after the death. It provides that the life after death is very much dependent upon the deeds of a man in this world. Thus a man who obeys Allah and surrenders his desires to him will enjoy the blessing of hereafter ~~to~~ ~~contrary~~ ~~to~~ the ~~one~~ who just sought his worldly pleasures and did not obey Allah.

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6. Holy Prophet (PBUH) as a role model
Muhammad (PBUH) is a perfect
practical example of Islam. From
his personal life to his role
of a leader of Muslim Ummah
every aspect of his life is
a standard of how muslim
should lead his life. Allah (SWT)
says in verse 21 of Surah Ahzab
that "Indeed, in the Messenger of
Allah you have an excellent example"
The observance of prayer is highly
stressed upon in Quran by Allah
but its practical example is
exhibited by prophet Muhammad.
(PBUH).

7. Complete way of life.

Islam is a complete code of
life, the quality which renders
it a "Din" rather than just a
religion. It deals with all aspects
of life be it personal, social,
economical, political, legal, cultural,
moral, material, national or
international. From a birth of an
individual till his death Islam
provides the complete
guidance.

8. Direct relation of an individual with Allah (SWT)

Islam stresses upon the fact that a man has direct relation with Allah, it rejects the idea of intercession. Islam provides that a call from the heart of a believer directly goes to Allah and none comes in between, unlike the concepts found in other religions like Buddhism, or Hinduism.

The worships prescribed by Allah constitutes the relation of an individual with his Lord without the involvement of anyone else.

9. Balance between individual & society.

Islam talks about the collectivism.

A role of an individual in the society holds much importance. One's relations, ~~or~~ duties, responsibilities, his behaviour and what not,

everything is guided by Islam. But it does not mean that

one should not care about his individuality in the society.

A muslim must maintain a balance between individualism & collectivism, with careful considerations that either of them must not overpower the other.

10. Complete and Universal.

Islam is a final message of Allah, that he has sent to the whole of mankind, without any constraints of time, region, & sect, which means that it is universal and is sent for everyone who is willing to accept the truth. As far as the completeness is concerned Allah says in Surah Maidah that "Today, I have perfected your religion for you". So, the teachings of Islam are applicable till the end of time.

11. Preservation of the Book.

Preservation and protection of the holy book i.e. Quran is a miracle which only Islam holds. Allah has made himself responsible for its protection as verse no. 9 of Surah Al-Hijr says:

إِنَّا لَنزِيلْنَا الْكِتَابَ وَاللَّهُ كَفِيلٌ

It is certainly we who have revealed the reminder, and it is certainly we who will preserve it."

It is a key feature of Islam a quality which other religions

Jacks. as their teachings either have been disappeared or were changed/ altered due to personal or political motives.

12. Unity among the believer.
Islam commands its believer to live in society as one community and establish sincere and healthy relations with one another based on Islamic rules and commands. Islam strictly forbids the division by saying.

"And hold firmly to the rope of Allah altogether and do not become divided." (Surah Ale Imran Verse 103)

13. Islam: A Din of Moderation:
Islam is a din of moderation, it is not so strict neither so soft but provides a moderate path for the believers contrary to Christianity or Judaism, as Christianity holds a very soft attitude whereas Judaism being very strict in its teachings. Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) has said that "ruined are those who insist on hardship in matters of the

faith" (Sahih Muslim)

14. Practicality and Rationality of Islam.

Islam is very practical and rational with regard to its rules and commands. Its rules are very ~~are~~ much simple without any vagueness and uncertainty and are based upon reason and sound logic. Being free from mythologies, superstitions and irrational beliefs Islam stresses upon finding the rationale by using the intellectual capabilities.

15. Islam promotes humanity.

Human and humane are two different things. Being human is a natural or biological phenomenon whereas being humane means to hold certain natural instincts for everyone without being biased in any situation. Such instincts includes ^{the feelings of} love, care, sympathy, tolerance, welfare and empathy for everyone without any discrimination.

Some of the key features of humanity in Islam are as follows.

⇒ Characterful.

Islam highly emphasizes upon the character building of a follower, number of verses of Quran and Hadith forbids the ill ~~to~~ to a

muslim's character, teaching the manners and principles of goodness. As Muhammad (PBUH) has said that "the perfect among the believers are those who are best in character."

⇒ Charity:

The economic system of Islam tends to uplift the poverty from grassroot level, that is why the concept of zakat hold an eminent place in Islamic principles. Allah (SWT) has provided classifies in Quran. That who is the most deservant of charity which is the very family of the person giving zakat and then it mentions the people more deservant after it.

⇒ Provision of Medical services.

Saving the life of a human is appreciated in Islam. Allah says in Surah Al-Maidah that whoever saves a soul it is as if he had saved all of humanity

⇒ Service to mankind.

* Biggest quality of Islam is the practice of social services, even removing a stone from a pathway amounts to service to mankind in Islam.

⇒ Human Rights.

Islam is an unbiased religion which believes that every human is entitled to enjoy human rights just by the virtue of being human. In the last/farwell sermon of Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH), he provided that an Arab is not superior to a non-Arab and vice versa, and a black is not inferior neither superior than a white.

⇒ Animal Rights..

As all creations belong to Allah alone, so none should be treated cruel or in bad manner. Once prophet Muhammad (PBUH) reprimanded a Badoo because his camel was thirsty, and a woman was sent to hellfire because she starved a cat to death.

⇒ Environmental Protection.

Islam talks about saving the environment for other beings and for the generation to come. Muhammad (PBUH) has forbidden to cut the green trees even in a state of war. Another hadith prohibits a muslim to waste even a single drop of water even if he/she is sitting near a running stream.