

Islamic studies

Assignment #1

Q: what is Islam & its characteristics / salient features?

Islam:

Islam is an arabic word meaning the act of resignation to God. Islam is the religion that brings peace to man when he resigns himself to Allah. Islam as a religion means complete obedience to Allah & the will of Allah. & by doing this man is able to obtain peace of mind, body & soul.

"Those who believe and whose heart finds 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 bliss home to return to"

(Al-Quran, 13-28-29)

Humans need resources in order to not only maintain their life, but also to fulfill their own needs as well as the requirements of the society, they also need knowledge and guidance requiring different aspects of life. Islam provides all these resources and guidance. It is a complete code of life, it provides all the knowledge and resources fulfilling spiritual, social and cultural needs of man.

Islam teaches mankind how to live their life, guiding them in every aspect of life with practical examples given through the life of Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H), providing a practical role model to follow. Allah sent many prophets that taught the difference between right and wrong path as well as the consequences of choosing & following both right & wrong paths.

Allah sent Quran that provides guidance regarding every aspect of life, issues that one might face as well as

the solutions for those issues.

A muslim when accept Islam has faith in oneness of Allah who created the universe, man, and has all the authority however has given some of the rights to humans who have to use them based on their role and are to answer for the authority they have, to Allah.

A muslim, also believes in the Prophethood of Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) as illustrated in the kalma

لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله

"There is no God except Allah and Muhammad (P.B.U.H) is the messenger of Allah"

A muslim also believes that this world is not permanent & is a place of trial where one is being tested by Allah through his actions. As Islam teaches that this life will one day come to an end and then man will be rewarded

or punished based on the life he has lived.

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

(Al-Auran, 6: 160).

Characteristics / Salient features of Islam:

Following are the

Characteristics / Salient features of Islam:

1) Tauheed:

Tauheed is one of the most important characteristics of Islam as Islam teaches that Allah is one, there is only one God, Allah, who created the entire universe and mankind. A Muslim

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strongly believes in the oneness of Allah
This is illustrated in the first kalma as
well

"There is no God except Allah:
Muhammad is the messenger of
Allah"

By believing in the oneness of Allah,
muslim also learns and strengthens his
faith in the prophethood of Muhammad
(P.B.U.H). Quran also proves the oneness
of Allah. As in Surah Ikhlas Allah has
said:

"Say, O Prophet: He is Allah, one
and unique, Allah who is in need of none
and of whom all are in need"

A muslim also believes that all worships,
rituals and systems are due to Allah.

Hence Islam teaches muslim to faith in
oneness of Allah and he should worship
no one but Allah.

According to Allama Shibli in his book "Sirah tun nabi":

"Tauheed is the first chapter of the Islamic syllabus"

2) Prophethood:

After believing in the oneness of Allah the most important pillar of Islam is to believe in the finality of Prophethood

"Prophet Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the messenger of Allah and the seal of the Prophets"

(Al-Auran, 33:40).

Allah sent Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) to provide a practical role model for Muslims to follow. Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) provided education or knowledge to the mankind as well as law. As it has said in surah Ahzab:

"Surely there was a good example for you in the messenger of Allah, for all those who look forward to

Allah and remember last day and Allah"

(Al-Quran, 33:21)

3) complete code of life:

Islam is the religion that guides about every aspect of life, providing guidance not only about individual life but also about living in a society guiding about one's relationship between child and parent as well as relationship with relatives and other peoples living in the society. Through all this guidance, Islam builds character of the Muslim guiding different values, morals and beliefs one should strongly believe on.

For the guidance of which Allah sent Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) as a role model, whose character Muslims should follow

As Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) has guided about importance of Education, as it teaches one how to differentiate between right and wrong.

Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) has said:

" Seeking education is obligatory
for every muslim "

Islam teaches not only about the matters of individualistic life but also about collective life including social systems including the rights and duties of neighbours political system, financial system, justice system, system of administration and all the global affairs are taught by Islam teachings and guidance.

4) Dignity to mankind

Before Islam, Humans were treated very poorly on the base of their status. Humans were sold as slaves and were treated extremely bad by others. women were not respected. Daughters were considered to be shameful and were often buried as soon as they were born.

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Islam emphasized on the respect of women, taught to be affectionate towards children. Allah also provided dignity to mankind by giving them rights and authority to use in the different matters of life.

Allah advocated for humans in front of Angels

"I am going to place a successive human authority on earth"
and when angels asked Allah

"will you place in it someone who will spread corruption there and shed blood while we glorify your praises and proclaim your holiness"

To this Allah responded:

"I know what you do not"

(Al Quran, Surah Baqarah: 30)

5) Promotes Humanity

Islam promotes humanity, emphasizing on being helpful towards others, doing

Charity and social work. Not only that, Islam also emphasizes on human rights but also animal rights and protection of environment.

" Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) once reprimanded a man whose camel was thirsty "

Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) also emphasized on protecting environment

" Don't cut clean trees even if you are in a war "

6) Universality:

Islam is a universal religion as the teachings of Islam are not just for Muslims but for all mankind.

Anyone can follow the teachings of Allah and Prophet (P.B.U.H).

" O people! I am the messenger of God to you all "

(Al Quran, 34: 28)

Hence Islam is not just for Muslims but for all the mankind and Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) is also the role model for all mankind.

7) Rational and Practical:

Islam is a rational and practical religion as all of the teachings are free from any irrational and superstitious beliefs. All teachings are based on logic and reasonings as they are easy to understand and straight forward. Islam promotes and emphasizes the importance of obtaining education so that one can differentiate between right and wrong and can remain free of believing in superstitious and artificial beliefs. Allah said:

"Those who have no knowledge are not equal to those who have"

(Al-Auran, 39: 9).

Similarly, Islam is based on practicality. As not only all the teachings of Islam are based on practical examples shown by Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H).

Similarly, it's not just based on beliefs but also on showing those beliefs through practical examples and deeds.

Allah has said in the Holy-Quran:

"Those who believe and act righteously, joy is for them, and a blissful home to return to"

(Al-Quran, 13:29).

Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) said:

"Allah does not ~~belief~~ accept belief if it's not expressed in deeds, and does not accept deeds if they don't conform to belief."

8) Permanence and change

Islam teaches balance between

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permanence and change as being permanent in a society makes things more rigid without any flexibility on base of situations. whereas constant change can make things shapeless and structureless. As Allah has taught humans about various issues one can face in the society and has provided such solutions and techniques in a realistic way that can be adopted on base of situations.

⑨ Complete and Preserved record of teachings:

All the teachings of Islam are preserved in their original form. There is no change and won't be any change in the teachings of Allah. All the teachings of Allah have been preserved in form of Quran that has been in existence for over fourteen hundred years. containing all teachings of

Allah and Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) in detail for the guidance of mankind.

Allah said in the Holy Quran:

"Indeed, it is we who sent down the Quran and indeed, we will be its guardian"

(Al-Quran, 15:9)

10) Unity of matter and spirit:

Islam is a religion who divided matter & spirit but rather focuses on fulfilment of life uniting matter and spirit. Rather than asking man to completely avoid materialistic things and desires, Islam teaches to live piously. To enjoy life without being extravagant or being a show off.

"Eat and drink, but do not be extravagant" (Al-Quran, 7:31)

Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) said:

"A muslim who lives in the midst of society and bears with patience the afflictions that come to him is better than the one who

shuns the society and cannot bear any wrong done to him".

ii) Based on Divine Revelation:

Unlike other religions, Islam is not a religion based on religious leaders and theories of people rather all the teachings of Islam by Allah have been given in the form of Divine revelations also known as wahy. Allah sent his revelations upon his Prophets who then guided the people All of which are completely preserved in the form of Holy Quran.

ii) Free from all doubts or superstitions:

Islam and its teachings are free from any doubts and superstitions as all the teachings of Allah are in the form of written law with the teachings that can never mislead anyone.

13) An Ideal economic system:

Another characteristic of Islam is its teachings regarding developing an ideally economic system as Islam prohibits interest and emphasize on charity also known as Zakat in order to bring balance in the society. It prohibits to earn from any illicit source

14) Peaceful:

Islam is a religion that promotes peace and values human life. It does not promote destructions. Promotes peace to such an extent that even in a war muslims have been told to accept offer of peace if given by the enemy. As Allah has said in Holy Quran:

"And if they incline to peace,
then incline to it and rely
upon Allah"

(Al-Quran, 8:61).

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15) Promotes Freedom of thought:

Islam promotes freedom of thought rather than restricting or coercion in faith.

" those who believe and do good works, their lord guide them by their faith "

(Al-Quran, 10: 9)

Even though Islam teaches the difference between right and wrong however even if muslim still ends up making mistakes Allah forgives if asked for forgiveness.

As Allah has said in the Holy Quran:

" Those who have wronged themselves! Do not despair of the mercy of God; verily Allah forgives all sins "

(Quran, surah zumar : 53).