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What is Islam? Elaborate salient features of Islam.

Answer:-

Islam is one of the major world religions, with over a billion followers across the globe. It is a monotheistic faith that centres around the belief in one God (Allah) and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). It originated in the holy land of Mecca in the 7<sup>th</sup> century and provides a complete guide in every sphere of life, be it political, social or economic. The Quran and Hadis are the two fundamental foundational texts that guide Muslims in practice and beliefs of Islam.

### Meaning of Islam

Islam is an Arabic word, with root words 'SLM', pronounced 'salam' which means 'peace', from which comes the word 'aslama' which means "he submitted", "he resigned" himself. Allah almighty says in Quran:

"O Prophet! Follow what is revealed to you from your Lord - there is no ~~lord~~ God 'worthy of worship' except him - and turn away from the polytheists" (109:6).

In the words of famous Islamic scholar, Dr. Hameed Ullah, "Islam is the monotheist deen revealed upon prophet Muhammad (PBUH)."

Imam Ghazali defines Islam as, "Islam is the fulfillment of the rights of Allah and the rights of people."

### Islam as a universal Deen:-

Islam is a universal deen that guides mankind in all aspects of life. The teachings of Islam are timeless and relevant and guide humanity through evolving times.

Islam is inclusive and universal. The prophet (PBUH) emphasized on the equality of all humans during his last sermon, stating, "No Arab has any superiority over non-Arab, nor does a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab."

From the birthplace of Islam in Arabian Peninsula, it has spread to every corner of the globe. The annual pilgrim of Hajj symbolizes the unity and universality of Islam, where Muslims from all over the world gather.

### Salient features of Islam:-

Following are the salient features of Islam:-

#### 1. Tauheed :-

Islam is a monotheistic religion emphasizing on the oneness of Allah. It is the core principle of Islam and the first part of 'Kalma', "There is no God but Allah". In Islam, all the worships, beliefs, faiths and rituals revolve around this unique concept of Tauheed. As Allah (swt) says in Quran.

"Say, He is Allah, One, Allah, the Eternal Refuge. He neither begets nor is born. He Nor is there to



him any equivalent." (Surah Ikhlas : 1-4).

The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) once quoted: "Islam is like a fort and the gate to that fort is Tauheed".

## 2. Nabuwat:-

Belief in Prophethood is one of the core tenets of Islam.

It is the second part of Kalma, which means,

"Muhammad is the messenger of Allah".

Islam holds that Muhammad (PBUH) is the final prophet of Allah as mentioned in Quran: "Muhammad is <sup>not</sup> the father of any of your men, but he is the messenger of Allah and the last of the prophets..." (33:40)

The Prophet (PBUH) is revered as the ultimate educator and a perfect model for his muslim followers. He conveyed the divine message with clarity and patience. The

Prophet (PBUH) quoted:- "Verily! I have been sent as a teacher to mankind."

## 3. Complete code of life:-

Islam is a complete code of life and provides a detailed framework that guides every aspect of life.

In individual life, islam offers guidance from the ~~mom~~ moment of birth until death. For Example, the call to prayer (Adhan) is whispered in newborn's ear, and specific funeral rites are followed after death.

Similarly, Seeking knowledge is highly encouraged in Islam. The prophet (SAW) said, "Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every muslim". The emphasis on education fosters ~~the~~ intellectual growth and pursuit of wisdom.

Islam guides muslims in their collective lives as well. It provides clear guidelines on the rights



and duties of spouses, parents and children. The Quran states, "And among his signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy." (30:21)

#### 4. Promotes Humanity:-

Islam advocates for the dignity and rights of all living beings, fostering a just and compassionate society. In Islam all human beings are equal in the eyes of God, regardless of race, color or ~~social~~ social status. The prophet (PBUH) said, "An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab and nor does a non-Arab have any superiority over an Arab."

Muslims are encouraged to show compassion, and mercy to others. Acts of kindness and charity are highly valued and helping those in need is considered a form of worship.

#### 5. Spiritual purification and Self-Discipline :-

Islam places great emphasis on the spiritual purification and self-discipline on his followers. These practices help Muslims maintain a close relationship with Allah and lead a righteous life.

Regular acts of worships, fasting, Zikr, recitation of Quran are means of achieving spiritual purification. Muslims are encouraged to purify their hearts from negative traits such as arrogance, greed and envy. The Quran states, "He has succeeded who has purified it, and he has failed who instills it [with corruption]." (91: 9-10).



Fasting during the month of Ramadan teaches self-control and empathy. Giving Zakat and engaging in charity promotes selflessness and concerns for others' well being.

#### 6. Day of Judgement and Accountability:-

The belief in the Day of Judgement is a core tenet of Islam, reminding Muslims of their ultimate accountability to Allah for their actions. On this day, every individual will be resurrected and held accountable for their deeds. The prophet (PBUH) often spoke about the Day of Judgement to remind his followers of its significance. He said, "The wise person is the one who controls himself and works for what will come after death."

#### Conclusion:-

"Let there be no compulsion in religion, for the truth stands out clearly from falsehood. So whoever renounces falsehood and believes in Allah, has certainly grasped the firmest, unfailing hand hold." (2:256)

Islam is a complete code of life, rooted in the core beliefs of Tauheed, which underscore oneness of Allah and Nabuwat. It offers a complete of life that provides guidance in all spheres of life. It promotes humanity, compassion, justice and equality. It also focus on spiritual purification through worships, fasting and charity, preparing believers for the day of judgment. These salient features collectively highlight Islam's universality and its role in fostering a balanced, just and spiritually enriched life.