

ISLAM

Islam is derived from the Arabic root "salem", which means peace, purity, submission and obedience. It is the submission to the will of Allah and obedience to his law. Allah says in the Holy Quran in Surah Aal-e-Imran, Verse number 19:

"The religion before God is Islam (submission to His will)"

Islam is the name of the Religion sent by Allah through all His messengers. Islam in its latest form as brought by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is superior to others. A Muslim is the one who submits to the divine injunctions and does not deviate from them.

The Quran tells us:

"The Messenger [Muhammad (PBUH)] believes in what has been sent down to him from his Lord (so do) the believers. Each one believes in

Allah, His Angels, His Books
and His Messengers."

(Surah Baqra : 285)

SALIENT FEATURES OF ISLAM:

Following are salient features of
Islam:

1. Touheed:

Touheed is the central doctrine
of Islam. It is the foundational belief
that there is only one God, without
any partners, associates, or equals.
It is the first part of kalma. The
unique concept of Touheed makes
Islam different from Christianity and
Judaism.

Quran says:

Say, "He is God, the one.

God, the Absolute

He begets not, nor was He begotten

And there is nothing comparable
to Him."

(Surah Ikhlas : 1-4)

Tauheed is the core pillar of Islam. It encompasses oneness of God's essence and attributes. Allama Shibli Nomani in his book (Seerat-un-Nabi) says:

"Tauheed is the first chapter of Islamic Syllabus."

It presents a unified view of the world and offers the vision of an integrated universe. It means that all men are the creatures of one God and they are all equal.

"Islam is like a fort and the gate of that fort is Tauheed"

(Allama Shibli Nomani in his book Seerat-un-Nabi)

Tauheed is a dynamic belief and a revolutionary doctrine.

2. Prophet hood:

It is the second part of kalma to believe in finality of Prophet hood. Allah has revealed His guidance through His prophets and Muhammad (PBUH) was the last prophet.

Allah says in Quran:

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

(Al-Ahzab: 40)

Thus, the second basic postulate of Islam is to believe in the Prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH), to accept the religion which he presented and to follow his commands.

Dr. Israr Ahmad in his book [The Objective and Goal of Muhammad's Prophethood (PBUH)] says:

"The mission of Prophet

Muhammad was not merely to establish a religion, but to transform hearts, minds and societies towards the path of righteousness and justice."

The test of acceptance of God and His prophets lies in conducting all human affairs in accord with

the Law revealed by them.

“And those who do not make their decisions in accordance with that revealed by Allah, they (in fact) are the disbelievers.”

(Al-Ma'idah : 44)

Belief in the prophet involves acceptance of Shari'ah, the path, he has conveyed and to implement that in all walks of life.

3. Belief in the hereafter:

According to Islam, the world is a place of trial and man is being judged in it. Followers of Islam believe in the hereafter. One day, life on the earth will come to an end, and after that a new life will begin.

“Every soul will taste death, and you will only be given your full compensation on the day of Resurrection.”

(Surah Al-e-Imran)

Believing in the hereafter makes man to be more careful because he will have to give account of all that he does herein. The man will be rewarded or punished for his deeds and misdeeds in the hereafter. Allah says in Quran:

"So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it."

Those who live in the present world a life of obedience to the Lord will enjoy eternal bliss in the hereafter.

3. Complete code of life:

Islam guides in every aspect of individual and collective life. It offers guidance not only matters of spirituality and worship but also on various aspects of personal, social, economic and political life.

Narrated by Ayesha (RA) : Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said,

"I have left among you two things which will never lead you astray if you hold fast to them : the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet."

In individual life, Islam guides us from the beginning that giving azaan in newborn's ear and performing aqeeqa is mandatory. It provides a guideline on upbringing of child. It teaches us on character building. Islam emphasizes on seeking education. Holy Prophet (PBUH) said:

"Seeking knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim."

In collective life, Islam provides an accurate political system, financial system and judicial system. It discusses all matters of society, welfare state and global affairs

4. Humanity:

Islam promotes humanity in several ways, fostering compassion, justice, equality and social responsibility. It emphasizes compassion and mercy toward all living beings.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is described as a mercy towards all living beings. (Al-Quran)

Muslims are encouraged to emulate his compassionate and merciful character in their interactions with others. Allah's Messenger said,

"The best among you is the one who is best in character."

Islam advocates for social justice and equality, regardless of race, ethnicity or socioeconomic status. Zakat is an obligatory charity. Islam upholds the dignity and right of every individual, emphasizing respect for human life, honor and integrity. Islam condemns all forms of prejudice, discrimination and injustice.

Islam promotes peace and harmony at both individual and societal levels.

Narrated by Abu Huraira : Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said,

"A prostitute was forgiven by Allah, because, passing by a panting dog near a well and seeing that dog was about to die of thirst, she took off her shoe, and tying it with her head-cover she drew out some water of it. So, Allah forgave her because of that."

(Sahih al-Bukhari)

Islam fosters a culture of humanity, promoting the well-being and dignity of all members of society.

5. Prayer (Salah):

Muslims are required to perform 5 daily prayers facing the Kaaba in Mecca, as a means of establishing a direct connection with Allah and maintaining

spiritual discipline. Prayer offers moments for self-awareness and reflection. Allah says in Quran:

"Guard strictly your (habit of) prayers, especially the middle prayer; and stand before Allah in a devout (frame of mind)."

(Al-Baqarah: 238)

Salah acts as a shield against evil influences. It acts as a source of guidance and direction. It is a source of stress relief. Regular prayer helps purify the soul from sins.

"The key to paradise is prayer, and the key to prayer is cleanliness (ablution)."

(Hadith - Sahih Muslim)

Salah promotes the principle of equality regardless of background of all individuals

6. Fasting (sawm):

Fasting encourages self-discipline and self-control. It helps in

developing taqwa and patience. It offers an opportunity for the forgiveness of sins. It teaches patience and guidance. Narrated by Abu Huraira: Allah's Messenger said,

"Allah said,

"All the deeds of Adam's sons (people) are for them, except fasting which is for Me, and I will give reward for it.""

Fasting provides physical benefits such as detoxification of the body, improved metabolism, and the cleansing of the digestive system, leading to overall better health.

7. Charity:

Islam places great emphasis on charity as it is considered as one of the fundamental pillars of faith. It is not only encouraged but also obligatory in Islam. Even that first Caliph of Islam did jihad

for those who did not give zakat.

It is said:

"Charity begins at home."

It is believed to bring numerous blessings and rewards in this life and hereafter. It is considered a form of worship. Fasting strengthens one's spiritual connection with Allah

"Narrated by Abu Huraira : Allah's Messenger said ,

The best charity is that which is practiced by a wealthy person. And start giving first to your dependents."

Charity in Islam embodies principles of compassion, generosity and social responsibility.

8. Pilgrimage (Hajj):

Muslims who are physically and financially capable are required to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca at

least once in their lifetime. It involves a series of rituals commemorating the action of Prophet Abraham and his family.

"Pilgrimage to the House is a duty towards God upon humankind, for those who can find a way there."

Al-Quran (Surah Al-e-Imran : 97)

Haji offers a profound opportunity for spiritual cleansing and renewal. It brings together Muslims from diverse background and nationalities, fostering a sense of unity and brotherhood within the Ummah (Muslim community).

9. Equality:

Islam emphasizes the equality of all individuals regardless of race, ethnicity or social status. Muslims are taught to treat others with fairness and justice. Islam teaches

that all ~~Muslims~~ human beings are created equal by Allah. Islam advocates for the equal rights and responsibilities of individuals within society. All individuals have equal access to worship and spirituality in Islam. Islam promotes fair distribution of wealth and resources in society to ensure social justice and alleviate poverty.

10. Education:

Islam places great emphasis on the importance of education and knowledge. It is a fundamental aspect of Islamic teachings. Muslims are encouraged to seek knowledge throughout their lives.

"Read in the name of your Lord who created - Created man from a clinging substance. Read, and your Lord is the most Generous - Who taught by the pen - Taught man that which he knew not."

(Surah Al-Alaq : 1-5)

Holy Prophet (PBUH) said, "Seeking knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim." Islam promotes intellectual development and critical thinking.

"Are those who know equal to those who do not know?"

(Al-Quran)

Teaching is highly valued in Islam, and educators are respected members of society. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said,

"The Best among you are those who learn the Quran and teach it."

(Sahih Bukhari)

Honesty, integrity, humility and respect for others are integral aspects of the pursuit of knowledge in Islam.

II. Environment Protection:

Islam promotes environmental protection and conservation as a fundamental aspect of its teachings. Islam teaches that humans are trustees (khalifah) of the

Earth and its resources, entrusted by Allah to care for and maintain the environment.

"It is He who has made you successors (khalifah) upon the Earth."

(Al-Quran)

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) emphasized that planting a green tree is best charity. Muslims are instructed not to cut green tree even if you are in war. Similarly, wasting water is prohibited.

"Do not waste water, even if you perform ablution on the banks of abundantly-flowing ~~water~~ river."

(Sunan Ibn Majah)

Islam promotes a holistic approach to environmental protection, rooted in principles of stewardship, respect for creation, moderation and conservation.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, Islam is a comprehensive and dynamic Faith

encompassing a multitude of salient features that define its values. Islam provides a relevance and capacity to inspire and guides believers in navigating the complexities of modern world while adhering to timeless principles of faith, morality and righteousness.