

Q: What is Islam? And list the characteristics of Islam?

INTRODUCTION:

Islam is a Arabic term derived from the three letters S (س), L (ل), M (م), together it means, submission, surrender, commitment and peace. Islam is a monotheist religion, has revealed by Allah to prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Islam talks about fulfillment of life, here and hereafter. It is a religion covers all the aspect of life without any bounded territory.

In the book Introduction of Islam:

'Islam is an universal faith for all times, all places and all people'

CONCEPT OF ISLAM:

Islam word, instituted in Quran by Allah. ^{firstly}

'O Believers! Enter into Islam'
Al baqarah 2:208

The old name of Islam was di-e-hanifi. About different scholarly definition: "Islam is a montheist deen revealed upon holy prophet (P.B.U.H)" by Dr Haid-ul-Allah. "Islam is the combination of Right of Allah and Right of people" by Imam Gazali. "Islam is the collection of faith and worship", Islam at a Glance.

"Hadith-e-Jibreel (A.S): Islam is to bear witness that

1) None has the right to be worshipped but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah.

2) To establish pillar of Islam".

=> CHARACTERISTICS OF ISLAM:

1) TAUHIED:

Tauheed is a revolutionary concept, that means only one supreme lord of the universe. In the first part of the kalma is:

There is no god except Allah;

it mean belief in the unity of Allah.
He is omnipotent, omniscient and
the sustainer of the world and of
the mankind. It is the core pillar
of Islam which includes faith, worships,
rituals and systems. Alauddin Shibli
Nomani wrote in book *Strat-al-Nabwi*:
Tawheed is the first chapter of Islamic
syllabus.

Islam is like a fort and the gate of
that fort is Tawheed.

2) PROPHETHOOD:

'Muhammad is his prophet'

It is a second part of Kalima, signifies
that God revealed his guidance to
his prophet and Muhammad is the
last prophet. To believe in God so
to believe in prophets and his guidance.

'Muhammad is not the father of [any]
one of your men, but [he is] the
messenger of Allah and last of the
prophets. And ever is Allah,
of all things, knowing'

[Al Ahzab, verse 40]

Prophet has sent for the humankind, teaches them the way of life. Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) was the best example of it. Quran is a theory and prophet is the practical example of this theory.

"Verily, I have been sent as a teacher to mankind"

"Nor does he speak of his own whims. It is only a revelation sent down 'to him'". (An Najm - 3-4)

3) COMPLETE CODE OF LIFE:

Individual as well as social relations is discussed in Islam. Islam is not all about individuality but also covers the all aspects of life.

i) Individual life:

From birth to death, Islam teaches us every thing. Such as, upbringing of child, how to build a character of the child, education as many other. Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) said:

'Seeking knowledge is obligatory
for every muslim'

Islam also promote Inikelihood. Risk-e-Halal
is considered a worship and prophet Muham-
mael was a trader. It is also mention
the Duties of family ; right of spouse,
children, parents etc.

2) Collective life:

'No one of you shall become a
true believer until he desires for
his brother what he desires
for himself.' Al bukhari

Islam described in Quran, all the spheres
of life. It emphasise on the social
values; relation of one human to another,
their rights. Moreover, It described the best
political system and had a great example of
prophet life such as, Vulling in Madina,
charter of Madina, Treaty of Hudaibiya and
etc.

1) HUMANITY:

Humanity is a natural instinct without any discrimination. It is about care, welfare of society, protection of rights, empathy, patience and etc.

It promotes characterfulness of men. In surah hufrat 1 to 15 mention the character of the men. And prophet (P.B.U.H.)

said:

'The best among the believers are those who are best in character'

Islam promotes welfare of the people. Such as paying Zakat, charity and soon.

'All activities are considered by God as acts of worship if done in conformance to His guidance'

(Al bakarah 2:177)

Furthermore, In Quran, also protect the rights of Human, animal as well as Environment. such as last sermon of Prophet:

'An Arab has no superiority over non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab'

Prophet said about animals:

An act of cruelty to an animal is as bad as an act of cruelty to a human being.

Hadith related to Environment:

Do not cut a tree even in a war

'Planting a green tree is the best charity'

(c) SIMPLICITY AND RATIONALISM:

Islam is a religion without any mythology. Its knowledge is simple as well as intelligible. It is free from any superstition and irrational beliefs. There is no complicated rites and ritual. In Islam faculty of reason and encourage to use intellect.

In Quran 20:144 Allah advised to man to pray:

'O, my lord! Advance me in knowledge'

Prophet said:

'He who leaves his home in search of knowledge walks in the path of God'

6) PRACTICALISM:

'Those who believe and act righteously, joy is for them, and a blissful home to return to' (Al Quran, 13:29)

Islam is a practical religion. It does not promote pointless beliefs. In Islam, faith is not mere profession rather a mainspring of life. Islam is a religion to be lived. As prophet said:

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

7) UNITY OF MATTER AND SPIRIT:

Islam is not divided. It focuses on fulfilling life rather than denying. Islam encourages that the spiritual growth comes from devout living amid life's challenges, not renouncing worldly matters. The Hadith of prophet said:

'A muslim who lives in the midst and bear with patience the afflictions that

comes to him is better than the one who shuns society and cannot bear any wrong done to him.'

It emphasises on establishment an equilibrium between matter and spirit.

8) BALANCE BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY:

Islam is not about Individual interest but also society's responsibility.

'And in their wealth there was a rightful share 'fulfilled' for the beggar and the poor' 'Adh-Dhariyat - 19'

Islam guarantees the fundamental rights of individual, proper development and not lose individual individuality in a society. Islam awakens sense of social responsibility. Like in prayer the sense of collectiveness, social discipline, equality and Zakat has shared the sentiments, humanity and sharing. Prophet said

"The believer in God is he who is not dangers to the life and property of any other"

9) UNIVERSALITY:

All praise is for Allah -
lord of all worlds.

Al-Fatihah: 2

Quran is not ~~revealed~~ revealed for specific people, group, nation or territory. It is a universal deem of all the people and for all ages. Toynbee Historian wrote in "Civilization on Trial", The Crux of it:

Islam's potential to combat race consciousness and alcohol abuse in modern age, promoting tolerance and peace for a better future.

10) CONCEPT OF LIFE AFTER DEATH:

According to Islam. The world is a place of trial and ^{man} shall be judged for deeds. It will be in this life - after - death concept in Islam. That if life spends on the obedience to the lord will enjoy life after death. If a life spends on the disobedience to the lord that will be punished.

'Whoso is blind here will be blind in
the Hereafter, and yet further from
the road.' Al-Isra 72

41) COMPLETE RECORD OF TEACHING PRESERVED:

'As for the Admonition, indeed it is we
who have revealed it and it is indeed
we will preserve it' (Al Hijr: 9)

Quran existence of last fourteen hundred year
in its original form. There is not an
 iota of change in the unique historical
record. The saying and entire record
of life of prophet have preserve in
authentic form of hadith and sunnah

Professor Reynold mentions "The uniqueness
and originality of Islamic teaching as
compared to other religion" In literary
History of the Arabs.

CONCLUSION: Islam is a religion of oneness
of God, belief and exemplify the life of
prophet. It is a complete religion and
for the entire of world and every age of
people. It covers all the aspect, teaching
as well as present in the authentic form of it.