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ASSIGNMENT: 01

What is Islam? Enlist the salient features of Islam:

ISLAM:

Islam is an Arabic word that denotes submission, surrender and obedience. As a religion, Islam stands for complete submission and obedience to Allah - that is why it is called Islam. The other literal meaning of Islam is **peace**. It is said in Surah Ar-Rad (13:28);

"Such are the ones who believe (in the message of Prophet) and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah, Surely in Allah's remembrance do hearts find rest."

Furthermore in the **sharia** context Islam means:

"Expressing submission to Allah, implementing Sharia, and expressing commitment to the teachings brought by the Prophet."

According to Quran, there are various verses that deal with Islamic term,

Surah Al-Hujurat (49:14); "We believe." O Prophet say to them:

"You do not believe; you should rather say: 'We have submitted'; for belief has not yet entered your hearts. If you obey Allah and His Messenger, He will not diminish anything from the reward of any of your deeds."

Al-Rum (30:30): "So direct your face towards the religion, inclining to truth. [Adhere to] the nature of Allah upon which He has created [all] people. No change should there be in the creation of Allah. That is the correct religion, but most of the people do not know."

From these verses, it is revealed that namely Islam is submission to the will of Allah. It is the religion of nature (fitrah). Islam is the only religion accepted and blessed by Allah. Islam in accordance with its salient features is like a perfect building with a strong foundation of faith and pillars joints in the form of worship to Allah and beautified with noble morals.

SALIENT FEATURES OF ISLAM:

1) UNIQUE CONCEPT OF TAUHEED:

Tauheed refers to the oneness of God. It is the first part of Kalma. It is the core pillar of Islam.

Surah Ikhlas (112, 1:4); "He is Allah, the One and Only! Allah, the Eternal, Absolute; He begetteth not nor is He begotten. And there is none like unto Him."

Tauheed in Islam entails faith, worship, rituals for Allah and also the just system either in economic, political or social sphere. Shibli Nomani in his book Sirah Tun Nabi quoted 2 Ahadees about the importance of Tauheed;

1) "Tauheed is the first chapter of Islamic syllabus."

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

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Therefore it emphasizes the absolute unity of Allah in all aspects of his existence, attributes and actions.

2) PROPHETHOOD:

Prophethood is the second part of Kalma. It is a belief in the finality of Prophethood.

33:40; "Muhammad is not the father of any of your men but he is the messenger of Allah and the seal of the Prophets."

It is significant as it teaches the way of life refers to as Sunnah. It further teaches about education.

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

Prophethood is the primary source of Shariah.

Surat Najam; (53: 3-4); "Nor does he speak from (his own) inclination. It is not but a revelation revealed."

Prophethood further tells us about the straight path.

"Quran is the theory and Prophet (P.B.U.H) is the practice of that theory."

3) A COMPLETE CODE OF LIFE:

Islam guides in every aspect of life. It gives the knowledge about individual life that include one's own life, family life and also give details about the collective life that involve rights and responsibilities. Islam further tells about the upbringing of children as it is narrated that;

Masjid is also an institution where a child socialize."

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Islam focuses on better character building. Our prophet is the perfect example that he is the most truthful and honest. Islam also emphasize on obtaining education.

"Seeking knowledge is obligatory for every men or women."

Islam further tells about the ways of livelihood. It explains social system, political system, financial system, justice, administration and also the global affairs.

4) ISLAM PROMOTES HUMANITY:

Humanity is the natural instinct that comes without any discrimination. It includes love, care, welfare, sympathy, empathy and tolerance towards others. According to Islam, humanity is being characterful. In recent times, psychology also encourages this concept of humanity.

Prophet (P.B.U.H) said; "The perfect among the believers are those who are best in character."

Humanity is also synonymous to charity. Edhi said; "Humanity is in charity." Edhi rendered many humanitarian aid all over Pakistan.

Dr. Ruth Pfau is involved in charity in medical services. She established 157 leprosy clinics all over Pakistan.

Islam has taught us the lesson of humanity even before 200 years ago in Surah Baqarah that; (2:177); "Muslims are those who gives wealth in spite of love for it."

To help the needy, Islam has established the Zakat system which even started at grassroots level i.e. at home or relatives. It can be given to needy, poor, slaves and also Zakat administrator.

"The amount of Zakat can't be spend on Mosques."

"Zakat can be collected by force."

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The purpose of it is to help the human. It is considered the best worship in Islam. According to Hadees - e - Qudsi;
 "Allah shows displeasure from a person who never visit a sick person."
 Prophet (P.B.U.H) in his last sermon focused on human rights and teaches us about equality, end of racism and end of tribalism.
 "All mankind is from Adam and Eve. An Arab has no superiority over non-Arab, nor a non-Arab has superiority over Arab; Also a white has no superiority over Black, nor Black has superiority over white."
 Humanity is not limited to mankind only but also talk about environmental rights as well as animal rights. Prophet (P.B.U.H) reprimanded a nomad because his camel was thirsty.
 "Planting a green tree is the best charity". Prophet said.
 Prophet said; "Do not cut green trees even in the case of war."

5) COMPLETE AND COMPREHENSIVE:

Islam encompasses variety of systems, laws, and regulations that govern various aspects of formation and reform and managing all aspects of community life both in matters of creed, worship, morals or laws. Such as civil law, criminal law, social institutions, or international relations, or relating to *mumalak*, the fundamentals of government, economic principles and noble social values. Islam is thus a complete and comprehensive religion in all the aspects.

Al-An'am (6:38); "We have not neglected in the Register a thing..."

6) UNITY AND BROTHERHOOD:

Islam advocates the unity of humankind and its equality before God. It does not tolerate class warfare, social caste or domination of individual over society or vice versa.

There are various Qur'anic verses and tradition of Prophet (S.A.W) to eliminate racial pride and claims of ethnic superiority and prepare ground for genuine brotherhood.

(4:1); "O mankind, Fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women."

Islam conceives unity as the ultimate goal which is to worship God and serve his cause. Harmony and mutual security are key features of the Islamic system. Believers in the Oneness of God play a critical role in fostering unity and promoting altruism. When Prophet came to Medina, he made Ansara and Muhajira brothers. It gives perfect illustration of unity and brotherhood.

Quran (5:2); "Cooperate and help one another in righteousness and piety, and not in sin and rancor."

7) EASY AND SIMPLE:

Islam is easy and simple. Its teachings are easy to implement. It is stressed that Islam has never burdened humans beyond their capacity.

Al-Hajj/22:78; "He has chosen you and has not placed upon you in the religion any difficulty."

Likewise, Islam does not assume responsibility beyond human readiness and ability. It is evident in the application of pray 5 times a day and night, for those who have met the requirements. Tayamum is justified as a

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substitute for attition if someone does not get water or in a state of illness where exposure to water is prohibited. Moreover, travelers who generally face obstacles to perform prayers are permitted to do jamā and qashar with their prayers to avoid neglecting one of the religious obligations.

"And we have indeed made the Quran easy to understand and remember." (54:17).

8) JUSTICE:

The concept of justice in Islam is rooted in God's nature.

4:40; "Verily, God does not do even an atom's weight of injustice."

The believe in God's justice is linked to one's commitment to strive for justice and to avoid any form of oppression towards anyone in one's personal life.

(3:18); "God testifies that there is none worthy of worship except Him, as do the angels, and those endowed with knowledge standing firmly for justice."

Islam emphasized on social justice and standing with the marginalized.

Prophet (S.A.W) said; "Beware the supplication of the oppressed, for there is no barrier between it and God."

Islam is also very lenient and kind towards orphans. "So therefore don't treat orphans with harshness." (93:9)

Islam also set about eliminating and mistreatment and abuse of slaves.

Prophet (S.A.W) himself personally freed 63 slaves during his life. Prophet (S.A.W)

said; "He who frees a slave, God will set free every limb of his body from Hell in reward for every limb of the slave's body."

Islam has also been extra kind towards disabled people, diverse ethnicities and women. Islam advocate for combatting all sort of exploitation and

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should continue in modern times through advocacy for factory workers, rescuing victims of human trafficking, child labor, and forced marriages.

9) MODERATION OR BALANCE (AL-TAWAZUN):

All Islamic teachings maintain a balance between personal and public life, between body and spirit, between mental and spiritual material, between the world and Hereafter.

The Prophet said; "You owe a duty to your Rabb, you owe a duty to your body, you owe a duty to your family, so you should give to everyone his due." (HR. Muslim)

Principled moderation is one of the defining characteristics of good character in Islam; Allah said;

"Thus We have made you a justly balanced community that you will be witnesses over the people and the Messengers will be a witness over you."

Islam taught us to be moderate in balancing duties of religion and worldly life; "Do not recite too loudly in your prayer nor too softly, but seek a way between them."

We should be moderate in our relationship and menneism with others. Umar ibn-Al-Khattab said;

"Let not your love be infatuation and let not your hatred be destruction."

Islam emphasized to be moderate particularly when dealing with non-Muslims. Ibn-Hibban said;

"Do not exaggerate in seeking nearness to them, nor be excessive in seeking distance from them."

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10) COMPLEMENT, CLOSING AND SUPERVISING:

It said Islam as a complement, meaning that the teachings of Islam complement the teachings of religions existed before Islam. Completion is aimed at upholding religion so that Muslims do not divide.

(42:13); "Allah enjoyed all the prophets to be as one and He forbade them to differ and be divided."

Islam as closing because after Islam no more religion was accepted by Allah and there was no more prophets and messengers sent after Muhammad (P.B.U.H).

(5:3) "This day, I have perfected for you your religion, completed My favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion."

Islam as a protector, because its scope include preaching of previous prophets and eternal set of laws.

Allah said; "And we have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], the book in truth, confirming that which preceded it of the Scripture and as a criterion over it."

These teachings of Islamic da'wah go beyond origin, ethnicity, rank and even skin colour.

11) ORIGINAL AND ETERNAL:

Islam is original and eternal. It has remained unchanged since its revelation about 15 centuries ago, with Sunnah serving as the second source of Islamic law and preserving the heritage of Prophet from falsification. Scholars are responsible for preserving and protecting these heritages, ensuring their validity and accuracy.

Al-Hajj (15:9), "Indeed, it is we who sent down the Quran and indeed, we will be its guardian."

12) TRUTHFULNESS:

There are various morals Islam teaches us and truthfulness is one of them. Telling the truth and avoiding lies are two basic characteristics of a true and faithful muslim.

9:119, At-Taubah, "O you who believe! Be afraid of Allah, and be with those who are true (in words and deeds)."

Prophet (S.A.W) was known as truthful by the pagans of Makkah even before the declaration of his Prophethood and the emergence of Islam. He himself is the perfect example of truthfulness and urged his Ummah to always speak the truth.

Prophet (S.A.W) said; "Speak the truth even it is bitter."

Truthfulness is one of the basic necessities of society. It helps individuals attain rewards from Allah here and hereafter. It is one of the excellence of human attitude and one of the salient feature of Islam.

13) PEACE:

Islam is the religion of peace that promotes unity and harmony among people of all faiths. Muslims are taught to be compassionate towards others and to treat others with kindness. One of the

99 names of Allah is Salam which means peace. One of the most significant example is the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah

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which was signed between Prophet (S.A.W) and the people of Makkah. It was a landmark agreement that ensured peace and security for both sides.

(Quran 4:128); "Peace is better."

The meaning of peace in Islam is expressed by 4 Quranic terms of Amn, Silm, Salsm and Sulh. While the first three terms hold the same meaning of peace while the fourth referred^{the} means through which peace can be achieved.

(8:61); "And if they incline to peace, you also incline to it."

If conflict takes place, peace-making becomes the foremost duty of Islamic people. This aspect of peace is covered by the endeavours of Sulh.

Quran 59:23 discloses that peace is one of the names of God himself: "He is God, other than whom there is no God, the King, the Holy, the Peace, the Defender, the Guardian, the Mighty, the Omnipotent, the Supreme."

14)

UNIVERSALITY:

Islam is not limited by space and time. Islam applies to all times past, present and future, in all regions and for all types of ethnicities and human tribes without exception. Islam is a universal religion.

Throughout the Quran mankind has been addressed as; O People; or as O children of Adam and has referred to the guidance of all human beings.

61:9; "It is He who has sent His Apostle with the guidance and the religion of truth that He may make it prevail over all religions."

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The salient feature of universality allows Islam to adapt to the cultural environment, allowing it to develop ideas like prosperity, peace, tolerance, and democracy in modern life.

15) RATIONAL AND PRACTICAL:

Islam is rational and practical without any mythology. It is free from superstition and irrational beliefs. The oneness of Allah, the Prophethood and concept of life after death are the basic articles of its faith.

They are based on reason and sound logic. There is no hierarchy of priests, no farfetched abstractions, no complicated rites and rituals.

Islam allows individual to use his intellect. It enjoins him to see things in the light of reality.

The Quran advises him to pray: "O, my Lord! Advance me in knowledge" (20:114).

It asserts that;

"Those who have no knowledge are not equal to those who have." (39:9)

The Prophet ^(S.A.W) also said;

"To seek knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim."

This is how Islam brings men out of the world of superstition and darkness and initiates him into the world of knowledge and light.

CONCLUSION:

It can be concluded that Islam is the perfect religion. It advocates for humanity, universality, peace, truthfulness, rationality, balance,

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Social justice, unity and brotherhood. Its significant features are that Islam is complete, easy, original, eternal, closing and completing. As a Muslim, it is our prime duty to erect on these features that lead us to Heaven and make us a responsible human being in all aspects of life.

