

Hammad Afridi, batch 369. Islamiyat Ans #1.

Q:- What is Islam? List the salient features of Islam. (20).

Ans:- **1. Introduction: What is Islam**

Islam is a universal deen, revealed for the whole mankind, more than 1400 years ago. It was revealed as a guidance for mankind, forever. Like other religions ended after new deen religions came, Islam is the deen till the last day, and no new deen will come after it. Islam and its teachings know no boundaries, and is not limited to a specific geography. The best example is the event of hajj, where people gather together from hundreds of countries. Islam is also not confined to a specific ethnicity, and its teachings teaches us to avoid any type of racism, as our holy prophet (S.A.W) said that no arab has superiority over a non-arab, and no non-arab has any superiority over an arab. Islam is a complete code of life, that teaches us in every aspect of our lives. These aspects includes: individual life, collective life as a society, rights of children, rights of parents, day to day matters, manners, ethics, humanity, human rights, animal rights and last but not the least, environment protection.

2. Meaning of Islam

Islam have different meanings according to different ideologies.

Firstly, according to the contextual meaning of Islam, it is the voluntary submission of desires to the will of ~~Ala~~ Allah (s.w). There is no compulsion in Islam, and Allah want our own will to enter in Islam, as it is said in the holy Quran: "If it had been your Lord's will, all of the people on Earth would be believers". (2:256).

According to holy prophet (P.B.U.H), to bear the witness of Allah (s.w) and to practice five pillars of Islam, Kalma, Namaz, roza, zakat, and haji, is the meaning of Islam; as holy prophet (s.a.w) said "It is the prayer that distinguish between a believer and a non-believer". According to Imam Ghazali, the combination of the rights of Allah, and the rights of people, is the meaning of Islam; and hence fulfilling these rights makes one a believer of Islam. The ideology of Dr. Hameed Ullah states that Islam is a monotheist deen, that was revealed to prophet (P.B.U.H), to guide the whole mankind. Moreover, the Oxford dictionary states that the acceptance of monotheism, the final prophethood, the practice of

muslim culture, is the meaning of Islam. Lastly, in accordance with the ideology of Sadar-Uddin Islahi, Islam is the combination of faith and worship of Allah (s.w).

3. Salient features of Islam

3.1. Tauheed

Islam has a unique concept of tauheed. It is a God-centered deen, which stresses on the strict following of tauheed. The first part of our kalma also signifies the importance of tauheed. It is the ~~one pillar of Islam~~ as the rest pillars will invalidate without tauheed. The whole system of Islamic teachings are because of Allah, as the Quran is the word of Allah. Therefore the justice system, education system, and administration system is because of Allah (s.w). Prophet (P.B.U.H) also signified the importance of tauheed, as he said "Islam is like a fort, and the gate of that fort is tauheed". This hadees states the importance of tauheed, as one cannot be a muslim without it.

3.2. Prophet hood (finality)

Another salient feature of Islam is the finality of prophet hood. Allah has sent down prophet (P.B.U.H) as his last messenger, and no other messenger will be sent to Earth again.

The second part of our kalma also signifies that Muhammad (s.w) is the prophet of Allah (s.w). Prophet (P.B.U.H) has been sent down as a supreme source of guidance, and as a teacher for mankind, as he said: "Verily, I have been sent as a teacher to mankind"; (Al-hadis). Prophet (P.B.U.H) have practiced complete deen, and have shown us how to practice, with his Sunnah, which is no less than a magnificent gift to his followers.

3.3. Complete Code of Life

Islam is a Complete Code of Life. It guides us in every aspect of our lives. It guides us in individual lives, as well as collective life. It starts with the birth of a person, by praying Azan in his ears. Moreover, it guides us about the upbringing of a child, and the importance of mother, family and then the mosque, in his upbringing. It teaches us to build a good character, and to build character like prophet (P.B.U.H). It also teaches us about the rights of family, like behaving well with parents, being kind to our children and neighbor spouses. It encourages us to attain education, as holy prophet said "seeking knowledge is obligatory on every muslim". (Al-hadis). In collective life, Islam teaches us

to have a good social system, like fulfil the rights of ~~your~~ one's neighbors, and to obey social responsibility for the well being of society. Moreover it guides us in political matters, financial matters, justice and global affairs etc.

3.4. Promotes humanity

Islam is the only religion, that promotes humanity. It discourages racism, as well as nationalism. It emphasises on character building, which is most needed in humanity, as prophet (PBUH) said, "The perfect among the believers are those, who are best in character" (Al-hadis). Moreover, Islam significantly promotes the rights of animals, for example, it is not permissible to kill even ~~the~~ enemy's animals in the state of war. Islam also promotes social works, like medical services, as mentioned in Quran (5:32) that if a person saves one life, he saved whole humanity. Massive importance is given to help the poor, as zakat is the pillar of Islam, as said in Surah Baqarah (2:177), "Muslims are those, who give wealth in spite of love for it". Hazrat Abu-Bakr, the first Caliph of Islam, declared jihad against those, who refused to pay zakat. Islam also promotes

The environmental protection, as Prophet (P.B.U.H) said "Planting a tree is the best Charity". This shows how important is humanity, in the deen of Islam, and how Islam is different from other religions.

4. Conclusion

Hence, it is Islam that gave the right to the deprived ones. It is Islam, through which a peaceful and justified system is established in the world. Today's social activists are claiming about the rights, which Islam already gave us more than 1400 years ago, like anti racism, rights of spouses, rights of women, justice system that is fair, and the care for animals and environment. Indeed Islam is the ideal religion and verily it can solve the chaos of today's world.