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Assignment:

Q: What is Islam? Discuss salient features of Islam.

Ans:

Start with the summary of the answer as introduction

Meaning of Islam:

Islam is an arabic word and its root letters are S, L and 'M'. The term 'Islam' is used first time in Quran. Literal meaning of Islam is peace, surrender and submission. Old name of Islam was 'Deen-e-Hanif'. Hanif refers to a monotheist, someone who believes in ^{one} God.

In a broader context, Islam means entering into peace by submitting to the will of Allah. According to Quran, In Surah Baqarah Contextual Translation:

"There is no compulsion in religion. And the right is distinguished from the wrong. Hence those who rejects the evil ones and believe in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handle."

In Shariah, Islam is defined as the voluntary submission

of one's desire to the will of Allah. According to Hadith of Tirmidhi, Islam consists of two key components:

- Bearing witness to the oneness of Allah and acknowledging Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) as His Messenger.
- Establishing the pillars of Islam, such as prayer, fasting, charity and pilgrimage.

Scholarly Perspective on Islam:

→ According to Dr. Hamidullah:

"Islam is the monotheist deen revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H)."

→ According to Imam Ashari:

"Islam consists of two fundamental aspects: the rights of Allah and the rights of people."

→ According to Molana Sadrudin Islahi:

"Islam is the collection of two components: beliefs and worships."

Salient Features of Islam:

Islam is the religion sent by Allah on His last

Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H). It is the second most largest religion in the earth. It has some distinctive features which makes it different from other religion. Some are given in the following way:

1. Unique Concept of Tauheed:

Tauheed means the oneness of Allah. The first part of the Kalma (Tayyaba) tells that there is no God except Allah.

- In Surah Tahaas:

قُلْ سَوَاءٌ أَلَّهِ الْوَاحِدُ

Translation:

Say, He is Allah: the one and Unique.

Tauheed is the core pillar of Islam. It is the basic requirement of being a muslim. All the worships in Islam are directed solely to Allah, and every aspect of life - including ritual, political and judicial system, social values - revolves around Him. In 'Sifat-un-Nabi' book by Allama Shibli Nomani, a hadith is quoted about tauheed that:

- Islam is a strong fortress and Tauheed is the gate of that fortress.
- Tauheed is the first chapter of the Islamic syllabus.

2. Finality of Prophethood:

The second part of the Kalma (Tayyaba) signifies that Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) is the Messenger of Allah. Allah has revealed His guidance through His Prophets. The second pillar of Islam is prophethood. It means to believe in all the prophets and Messengers of Allah. It is also necessary to have belief of Muhammad as the final prophet of Allah.

In Surah Al-Ahzab, Allah also tells us about it.

ما كان محمد ابا احد من رجالكم
ولكن رسول الله وخاتم النبيين

Translation:

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

Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) is the representative of Allah and his (P.B.U.H) life is an exemplary model for all the mankind until the end of the world. That's why after Quran, sunnah is the most authentic source of Shariah for Muslims.

3. Accountability and Hereafter:

The Hereafter refers to the after life, a new world where mankind receives the outcomes of their deeds. It is the third core pillar of Islamic teachings. According to Islam, this world is a place of trial where man will be judged for his actions and get the consequences of his actions in Hereafter by Allah. In Surah Bani Israel, Contextual

"Allah is saying that He has fastened every one's fate on their neck. And on the day of Judgment, everyone's record will be open in the form of books before them. So everyone can read their deeds and decide their own fate."

On the Day of Judgment, those individuals who obeyed Allah and do good deeds in the world will be rewarded with eternal bliss. And those who disobeyed Allah and do bad deeds will be punished with Hell. This is the concept of afterlife in Islam. It fosters a strong sense of moral responsibility in Muslims to act right in the world.

Keep the description of single argument brief and increase the number of arguments instead

4. Universality of Islam:

Unlike previous religions, Islam is a universal deen, that is not confined to a specific region or ethnicity. As Islam is the last deen of the divine, it will endure until the end of the world. It gives guidance to all the mankind of the earth. In Surah Al Anbiya, Allah also tells us that:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

'And We have not sent you, (O Muhammad), except as a mercy to people of the whole world'

This ayat shows that Islam is the final and the last religion of Islam. And it is also the most authentic religion for all the mankind.

5. Complete code of Life:

Islam is a comprehensive religion which provides guidance at every aspect of life as in individual and social, moral, economic, political, legal, national and international. At individual life, from birth to death, Islam guides through reciting Azaan in baby's ear, upbringing by

the mother and character building. It focuses on truthfulness, honesty and integrity of a man. Also emphasizing on the education of every individual.

Hodith:

"Seeking knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim."

Allah encourages trade as the best livelihood. Islam also guides man in his economic and business activities by mentioning Halal and Haram sources of Income. In Surah Baqarah, Allah has said that:

واحل الله البيع وحرم الربوا

"But Allah has permitted trade and forbidden interest."

In collective life, Islam emphasis on rights and responsibility towards the society. Islam also provides principles for governance like justice, equality and the welfare of the people. Hazrat Umer (R.A), the second Caliph of Islam, is a model of Islamic governance. Shariah gives us the Islamic judicial system. The State of Madinah under Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) shows how foreign relations were handled with fairness and justice.

6. Preservation and Authenticity of the Quran:

Quran is the holy book which revealed on Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) in Islam. It is the only religious texts which remain unchanged since its revelation over 1400 years ago. Previous holy books and treatise was either changed or disappeared. But Quran is divinely protected by Allah as mentioned in Surah Al-Hijr:

• انا نحن نزلنا الذكر وانا له لحفظون.

"Indeed, It is We who sent down the Quran and indeed, We will be its guardian."

Allah also challenges non-believers to produce something similar to the Quran. In Surah Al-Baqarah, Contentual Translation:

Allah is saying to non-believers that if they have doubt about Quran sent down upon Muhammad (P.B.U.H), then non-believers should produce a surah like the surah of Quran. If they think, they are truthful.

7. Human Dignity and Equality:

Islam introduced the revolutionary concept of human dignity

and equality at a time when societies were plagued by inequality and humans were traded as commodities. In Islam, all human beings are equal irrespective of their race, colour, language and economic status. Islamic worship like offering prayers and fasting eliminates the social and racial barriers. The core identity of every worshipper is that of a servant of Allah. In Surah Bani Israil:

ولقد كرّمنا بني آدم

"And We have certainly honored the children of Adam."

Charity (Zakat), another worship of Islam prohibits the rich and wealthy ones to accumulate the wealth. Islam ensures that wealth circulates within the economy and bridging the gap between the rich and the poor.

In Surah Baqarah, Allah encourages people to spend their wealth in the way of Allah. Allah will multiply that amount and followers will get benefit in the world and the afterlife both.

a. Focus on knowledge and Reasoning:

Islam emphasizes on the pursuit of knowledge and the use of reasoning as essential parts of faith. The Quran encourages intellectual exploration, learning and reflection as pathways to understand the world and grow closer to Allah. The very first revelation on Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) also signifies the importance of knowledge. As in Surah-ul-Alaq

اقرا باسم ربك الذي خلق.
خلق الانسان من علق.
اقرا وربك الاكرم.
الذي علم بالقلم.
علم الانسان ما لم يعلم.

Translation:

Recite in the name of your Lord who created. Created man from a clot of congealed blood. Recite, and your Lord is the most Generous. Who taught by the pen. Taught man that which he knew not.

This concept set the stage for remarkable advancements in various

fields during Islamic Golden Age, especially in medicine, astronomy and mathematics. In medicine, Al-Razi, Ibn Sina and Ibn al-Nafis are the muslim scholars who contributed in medical science field. In the field of astronomy, Al-Battani, Al-Sufi and Ibn-al-Haytham are the most famous muslim scholars. In the field of mathematics, Al-Khwarizmi, Omar Khayyam and Al-Kindi are the muslim scholars who laid the groundwork for future discoveries.

Use specific and self explanatory headings

9. Status of Women.

In Islam, women get their rights on property, education, and participation in social and political life over 1400 years ago. Islam upholds the chastity and honor of women, with strict penalties against false accusations regarding their character. For instance, on Hazrat Maryam (A.S), an entire chapter is dedicated to her in the Quran. In Surah-ul-Meminoon:

وَجَعَلْنَا ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَأُمَّهُ

“And We made the son of Mary and his mother a sign.”

Islam also gives us the example of Hazrat Khadijah (R.A), the businesswoman in early Islamic times. Hazrat Ayesha (R.A), last wife of Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) faced false accusation against her character. But Allah send the revelation to proved her chastity and punished the wrongdoers.

While Islam acknowledges natural differences between the genders, it emphasizes a complementary relationship, with both men and women possessing distinct but equally valuable roles.

10. Prohibition of Interest:

Riba also known as interest, is strictly prohibited in Islam. In Quran, it signifies that those who deals with interest is like declaration of war against Allah and His Messenger (P.B.U.H).

In Sahih Baqarah:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَذَرُوا مَا بَقِيَ مِنَ الرِّبَا إِن كُنتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ .

"O you who have believed, fear Allah and give up what remains (due to you) of interest if you should be believers."

End with
conclusion