

Q. What is Islam? Elaborate the Salient features of Islam.

Introduction:

Islam is a monotheistic religion centered on the belief in oneness of God and belief in the finality of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Islam was originated in the 7th century, Mecca, Saudi Arabia. Its followers are called Muslims, who practice the divine injunctions and Sunnah of prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Islam is a universal and comprehensive code of life, a source of guidance in every aspect of life. It provides dignity to mankind and promotes humanity. Moreover, Islam spread rapidly throughout the Middle East, Africa and beyond with currently 1.8 billions followers worldwide.

Literal meaning:

The word Islam derived from the Arabic word S-L-M (سلم) which means peace, surrender and submission. The word Islam was first mentioned in the Holy Quran.

Contextual meaning:

Islam is defined as to enter peace by submitting to the will of Allah. It can also be defined as surrendering the desires to the will of Allah. According to Shariah, Islam is the Voluntary Submission to the will of Allah and entering peace. There is no Compulsion in the matters related to the religion. In Surah Baqrah, Allah says,

لا اكره في الدين

"There is no Compulsion in the religion."

In the last verse of Surah Al Kafirun, Allah Says,

لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ الدِّينِ

"For you is your religion and for me is mine."

According to Hadith,

"Islam is that you should testify that there is no deity except Allah and Muhammad is His messenger and you should perform the Salah, pay the Zakat, fast during

the month of Ramadan,
and Visit the house
of Allah, perform the
Hajj if you are able
to do so."

Scholarly Perspective:

According to Dr. Hameed Ullah, an
Islamic Scholar,

"Islam is the monotheistic
religion revealed upon
Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)."

Imam Ghazali, a prominent Islamic
Scholar, viewed Islam as:

"a Comprehensive way of
life, encompassing both
the right of Allah and
the right of people."

Salient Features of Islam:

These are the following salient
features of Islam:

1/ Tawheed: the Foundation of Islam

Tawheed is the revolutionary
concept and constitutes the essence
of Islam. It means to belief in
the Oneness of God. He is
omnipotent, omnipresent and the
sustainer of world and the entire

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mankind. All other aqaid are based on the concept of Tawheed. The first pillar of Shahada that

لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله

"There is no god but Allah and Muhammad (PBUH) is His messenger."

is the direct expression of Tawheed.

In the Hadith,

"Whoever says that there is no god but Allah Sincerely, he will be Admitted into paradise."

2/ Prophethood in Islam:

Prophethood is a core tenet of the faith in Islam, signifying that they are chosen by God to guide humanity. This belief encompasses acknowledging the truthfulness of all prophets and recognizing the Muhammad as the last of prophets. They serve as the role model for everyone and demonstrate the highest standards of righteousness, piety and moral character.

In Surah Ahzab, Allah says:

لقد كان لكم في رسول الله اسوة حسنة

"There is indeed a good model for you in the messenger of Allah."

The Quran refers to Muhammad (PBUH) as "**the Seal of the Prophets**" (Khatam ul Anbiya), Signifies that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is the Last of Prophets and no new prophet will appear after him.

3/ Dignity to Mankind:

Islam emphasizes the inherent dignity of all mankind. It views humans as the noblest of creatures and Vicegerents of God on earth. Islam stresses the importance of respecting every one equally without considering the cast, colour, creed and religion. The Quran states that God "**created man in the best of molds**" signifying that all humans are inherently valuable. In Islam, Allah commanded angels to prostrate Adam, as an act of honouring and recognizing His unique creation.

In Surah Al-Isra, Allah says,

"And we have certainly honoured the children of Adam"

Qays ibn Saad reported:

A funeral passed by messenger of Allah (PBUH) and he stood up. It was said to him, "It is a Jew." The prophet said, "Was he not a soul?"

4. Islam: The Complete Code of Life

The Statement "Islam is a complete code of life" means that Islam is a source of comprehensive guidance for all aspects of human existences. It is not limited to few rituals. It is a complete system that includes everything from personal conduct to social interactions, economics and politics. Islamic economic principles promotes justice and welfare. There is a prohibition of interest in ~~order that~~ ~~rich to~~ prevent the rich get richer and the poor get poorer.

The Holy Quran States that

"Allah has permitted trade and has forbidden interest."

Islamic governance is based on the principles of justice, equity and welfare of the people. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) provided an

example of Leadership: based on compassion and justice.

5. Islam: Service to Humanity

Humanity in Islam is a complete and deeply rooted concept that encompasses compassion, justice, equity and respect for all individuals. Islam teaches that Muslims must show kindness and love to all the creation of God regardless of the cast, colour, creed and religion. Allah has equipped a human self with a moral sense that discriminates between virtue and vice and moral and immoral. Islam places great emphasis on good manners. The prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

"The best among you are those who have the best manners and character."

The Quran and Hadith provides detailed guidance on maintaining family bonds and treating parents and family members with kindness. Islam also highlights the importance of helping marginalized and oppressed. It also teaches to treat animal with kindness and show care for nature and environment.

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Conclusion:

In a nutshell, Islam provides a holistic approach to live a balanced life. Its teachings are comprehensive and timeless. It emphasizes on both individual piety and social responsibility. Islam is a complete code of life covering all aspects of human existence. From promoting ^{Charity} ~~humanity~~, economic justice, political integrity to maintaining strong family bonds and much more.