

QUESTION:

What is Islam? Elaborate the salient features of Islam?

Answer:

"ISLAM: A WAY TO PEACE"

i Introduction:

Islam is complete divinely revealed system, centered on Tawhīd (Oneness of God) guided by Quran and Sunnah. It upholds dignity, prescribes a complete code of life and aims at human welfare.

Meaning and Concept of Islam

ii Derivation:

Islam is derived from an Arabic word "SLM", which means peace, submission and safety.

iii Literal Meaning:

- Peace,
- Surrender,
- Submission.

iv. Contextual meaning:

1. Islam refers to submitting your desires to the will of Allah in obedience.
2. To enter peace by submitting to the will of Allah.

v. Allah is Al-Salam (one of ninety nine names)
He is the originator and source of all peace

اللهم أنت السلام، ومنك السلام، تباركت
يا ذا الجلال والإكرام

"Oh Allah You are peace, from You emanates all peace, blessed are You, O Possessor of majesty and honour"

— Reference: Hadith in Sahih Muslim.

يُهدي به الله من اتبع رضوانه، سبل السلام

"By it Allah guides those who seeks His pleasure to the ways of peace"

— Reference: (5:16)
Quran.

vi) According to Sharīah:

"Let there be no compulsion in religion"

Reference (Quran 2:256)

لا إكراه في الدين

As per Sharīah, Islam is the voluntary submission to the will of Allah.

vii) Definition of Islam:

1- Guramic Definition.

"The religion before God is Islam" (3:19)
Quran

ان الدين عند الله الاسلام

2- Prophetic Definition.

Hadith:

"Islam is based on five principles; To testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah, and Muhammad (PBUH) is the messenger of Allah and to establish pillars of Islam; offer prayer, pay zakat, perform pilgrimage and hold fasts in the month of Ramadan"

3- Hamidullah

"Islam is the monotheist deen revealed upon Prophet PBUH"

4- Imam Ghazali

"Islam is the combination of rights of Allah and rights of people".

5- Molana Jadaruddin Islahi

"Islam is the combination of faiths and worships"

- (Book: Islam at a Glance)

"Indeed actions are the result of intentions."

- Hadith

⇒ ISLAM AS UNIVERSAL DEEN.

وما أرسلناك إلا كافة للناس بشيراً ونذيراً

"And we have not sent you, except to all of mankind, as bringer of glad tidings and a warner"

- Reference (34: 28)
Quran

Islam is continuation and completion of same divine message sent to all prophets from Hazrat Adam (AS) to Prophet (PBUH). It guides about every aspect of life and it is not limited to specific time period, ethnicity or geography. It is for entire mankind.

من قتل نفسا بغير نفس فساد في الارض
فكلما قتل الناس جميعا، ومن احياها فكلما
احيا الناس جميعا

"Whoever kills a life, unless for a punishment of murder or mischief in the land, it will be as if, they have killed all humanity, and whoever saves a life, it will be as if, they have saved all of the humanity"

Reference: (5:32)
Quran

→ ISLAM SYMBOL OF DEEN REVEALED ON PROPHET (PBUH)

Allah has clarified not to accept from man any other deen even if it was from the previous deens.

- Reference (3:85) Quran.

"Whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted from him, and he will be among the losers in the hereafter."

وَمَنْ يَبْتَغِ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ فَلَا يَبْتَغِ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ
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- Reference: (3:83) Quran

"Do they seek any other religion than Allah's? While knowing everything in the heavens and the earth submits to Him, willingly and unwillingly, and to Him they will all be returned."

أَفَتَبْتَغُونَ دِينَ آلِ اللَّهِ لِيُخْلِصَ لَهُمْ نَفْسًا يَفْقَهُوا
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" SALIENT FEATURES OF " ISLAM

1. Tawhid: The bedrock of Islam.

قل هو الله احد، الله احد، لم يلد ولم يولد، ولم يكن له كفوا احد.

"Say, He is Allah (who is) one, the eternal refuge, he never begets nor born, and there is none comparable to him

Monotheism:

- Reference (112: 1-4)

Tawhid is the first ^{part} chapter of Kalma. It means that there is one superior Lord of the universe who is omnipotent and sustainer. Quran says;

الله لا اله الا هو الحي القيوم.

"Allah - There is no deity except Him, the Ever-living Sustainer"

- Reference: (2: 256)

The importance of Tawhid is also evident from;

Tawhid is the first chapter of Islamic syllabus.

- Secretun Nabi, Molana shibli

Islam is like a fort and the gate of that fort is tawhid

- Hadith

Impacts of Tawhid :

1. Tawhid develops love for Allah; above and beyond all worldly affairs / love.

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اشْرَحْنَا لَهُ

And those who believe, have eternal love
for Allah

(2:165)

2. Tawhid raises a man from abysmal of degradation to zenith of self-respect and dignity.

خودی و کر بلند اتنا کہ ہر تقدیر سے پہلے۔

خدا بندے سے خود بوجھے بتا تیری رہا کیا ہے۔

3. Tawhid protects individuals who believe from worshiping idols or their desires. Allah confers benefit that all their beliefs on fake gods and expectations from themselves are annihilated.

And the Jews and Christians say, "We are the sons of Allah and His loved ones"

4. Tawheed inculcates patience in a believer and he faces the temporary obstacles and hardships with patience because he knows that;

إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

"Surely Allah is with those who patiently
steadfast."

(2:153)

Tawhid makes a man humble. When he knows that not even him everyone in the universe ~~are~~ is needy before Allah and that he can not go beyond his universe, he becomes epitome of intellectual and spiritual powers. Tawhid also makes a man brave by sucking all his fears because he knows that nothing in this world belong to him.

"And they call upon their sustainer in fear and hope"

- Reference Surah Sajda:
Ayat 16.

2. Prophethood /

Nabuwwah The Divine Institution of Guidance and Governance.

Allah has left no man without guidance. He appointed Prophets who conveyed His message & provided practical guidance for ethical, spiritual, social and political conduct.

Khatm-e-Nabuwwah:-

Prophethood is 2nd part of Kalma, and belief in the finality of Prophethood is an essential tenet of Islam and denial of it will constitute disbelief (Kufr).

ما كان محمد اباً من رجالكم ولكن الرسول الله
وخاتم النبيين

"Muhammad is not the father of any of your men and He is the messenger of Allah and the seal of the prophets."

Prophetic Role Model / - Reference: (33:40)
Surah Ahzab.

Support from Sunnah:

The Prophet SAW said that he has left two weighty things among his followers, Quran and Sunnah, and those who held them fast would be prevented from going astray. He (SAW) is a role model for all aspects of life.

لقد كان لكم في رسول الله اسوة حسنة
"Indeed in Muhammad (SAW), you have the excellent example"

- Reference (33:21)

Source of Law and Governance: Surah Ahzab

The Quran and Sunnah are primary sources of Islamic law and no legislation can contradict them. Through Nabuwwah Allah revealed Shariah, a complete legal framework regulating all aspects of life.

"Today I have perfected your faith for you, completed my favour upon you, and chosen Islam as your way"

— (5:3)

وما ينطق عن الهوى إن هو إلا وحي يوحى

"Nor does he speak of his whims, It is only a revelation sent down to him."

— Sorah Najam

(53:3-4)

Seerah:

Prophet (PBUH) freed literate prisoners after the battle of Badr in exchange of teaching ten muslims. He himself was not limited to delivering the revelation but explaining the divine commandments.

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

— Hadith

3- Dignity of Mankind: Divine Honour as Foundation of Human Rights.

Islam dignified believers regardless of their social status and earthly positions because such positions and influence can not take them away from

Submission to the Allah Almighty.

Example:

For example, the muslims who used to drink, ^{stopped} ~~forbade~~ drinking after Islam forbade it.

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْبَشَرِ خَلِيفَةً

"Remember, when your Lord said to the angels, I am going to appoint 'human' successive authority on earth."

— (2:30)

وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ ---

"Certainly, we have dignified the children of Adam."

"We have certainly, created man, in the best of stature."

⇒ Dignity is from Allah the Supreme owner
Allah has dignified man, without discrimination being the controller of all dominion.

لَعَزَّزْنَا بِنُورٍ نَّشَاءُ وَتَنَزَّلُ مِنْ شَاءُ

"You honour, whom you will and You humble whom you will"

5- Islam Promotes Humanity in All Aspects of Life.

Islam promotes harmony by safeguarding the rights of all creation. In the Farewell Sermon Prophet PBUH said;

"Your blood, your property and your honour are as sacred to you like the sanctity of this day, in this month."

Equality and Non-Discrimination:

Islam transcends race, caste, colour and class.

"O humanity! Indeed, We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into tribes and families so that you may get to know one another, Surely the most noble amongst of you in sight of Allah is the most righteous one".

— (49:13)

Surah Al-Hujarat

Protection of Rights:-

Islam protects life, dignity, property, honour and faith. Harmony extends to human rights, animal rights and environmental stewardship.

Cruelty to animal is forbidden and kindness is rewarded - (Sahih-al-Bulchari)

إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِأَمْرِ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَائِي ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ

"Indeed Allah commands justice, grace and generosity to close relatives."

— (16:90)

Prophet (PBUH) said;

"The creations are family of Allah and the most beloved of those is the one who is kindest to his family".

Harmony extends to ~~animals~~ ^{animals} as well.

* The Prophet (SAW) said that a thirsty man who gave water to a thirsty dog was forgiven for his act.

* Prophet (PBUH) reprimanded a person just because his camel was thirsty.

In Islam environmental stewardship is a religious duty.

1. "Planting a green tree is the best charity"

2. "Don't cut green trees even in case of war"

3. "Do not waste a single drop of water even if you are sitting on a running stream of water"

— Hadith

→ Social and Welfare Systems.

Islam's social welfare system, including Zakat, Waqf and Sadaqa eliminates poverty.

Zakat is a financial worship and only for the needy; first right is of family, then neighbours and then the state. Zakat cannot be spent on mosque.

أَمْ لَا الْيَسْرَاءُ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسْكِينِ ----

zakat is for the poor and needy ----

-(9:60)

→ Social Work

Islam promotes the message of social work 1400 years ago.

"If we talk about most important characteristics of Islam, it is Sadqa-e-Tariyah"

- Dr. Wasiullah Abbas.

6. Life After Death: Reward and Punishment.

Islamic rulings are not just abstract pieces of advices but in contrast it offers reward for the obedient ones and punishment for the transgressors. It is basic tenet of Islam.

فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ
وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ

So, whoever does an atom's of good deed will see it. And, whoever does an atom's weight of bad deed will see it "

erik

(99: 7-8)

So, this doctrine underlines moral accountability and perfect justice, that life is a trial or test and the hereafter is the final abode where perfect justice is served.

7- Generality And Universality of Islam:

Another feature of Islam is its generality and applicability to all mankind. This feature is linked with Tawhid, rooted in the belief that the Creator of all is One.

﴿مَا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَّا كَافَّةً لِّلنَّاسِ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا﴾

And we have not sent you Muhammad (PBUH) except, ~~comprehensively~~ to all mankind, ~~bringer~~ bringer of glad tidings and a warner.

Prophet (PBUH) said

— (34:28)

Quran.

"Every prophet used to be sent to his nation exclusively, but I have been sent for all mankind".

8- Idea with Simplicity, Rationality and Practicality.

Islamic teachings are simple and intelligible, free from superstitions and irrationality.

They are direct without any intermediaries.
Everybody can approach Quran and
translate it dictating into practice.

لا يكلف الله نية ولا وسعاً .

"Allah does not burden a soul
more than it can afford"

— (2:286)

Quran frequently appeals to human reason.

اولم يتفكروا في انفسهم

"Do not they ponder upon themselves?"

— (30:8)

9. Revealed Ideology: Divine Religion:

Islam is distinguished from other laws and ideologies whose sources are human mind, as in contrast the source of Islam is divine. It is continuation and completion of the same message revealed to previous prophets, affirming that the true guidance comes only from Allah.

ان الدين عند الله الاسلام

"Indeed, the religion before God is Islam"

— (3:19)

10- Balance between Individual and Society:

Islam creates a balance between rights and responsibilities. ~~but within the~~

It recognizes individual freedom, dignity, right to own property and earn livelihood but within the social framework, justice and moral conduct.

Prophet (PBUH) said;

"The example of believers in their mutual love, mercy and compassion is like that of a body, when any part aches, the whole body reacts with sleeplessness and fever"

"Cooperate with one another in goodness and righteousness and do not cooperate in sin and transgression"

This doctrine illustrates —(5:2)
that individual well-being Quran.
is intertwined with collective welfare.

Conclusion:-

Islam is a complete, divine religion, revealed upon prophets ~~the~~ process of revelation ended with Prophet (PBUH) whose teachings are for entire mankind and are simple, rational and practical, creating a balance between individual and collective life.

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