

Islam: Meaning, Definitions, and Salient Features

1. Introduction:

Islam is more than a religion; it is a comprehensive way of life encompassing, faith, worship, moral conduct, social justice and governance. It is derived from the Arabic word S-L-M which means peace, submission and security. The essence of Islam is entering into peace by submitting to the will of Allah.

"Indeed, the religion in the sight of Allah is Islam"

(Quran 3:19)

2. Meaning of Islam

a. Literal Meaning

i- Peace - attaining peace by submitting to the will of Allah.

" Those who believes and whose hearts find comfort in the remembrance of Allah. Surely in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find comfort."

(Quran 13:28)

ii) Submission — Surrendering to the commands of Allah.

" There is no compulsion in Islam. Verily the right path has distinct itself from the wrong path. Whoever disbelieves in Taghut and believes in Allah, then he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold, that will never break. And Allah is All-hearer, All-knower."

(Quran: 2:256)

b) Meaning of Islam

Scholars
According to Islamic Shariah

According to Imam Ibn Taymiyyah:

"Islam is to submit to Allah
with tawhid (Oneness), to yield
to Him in obedience, and to
disassociate oneself from
shirk (polytheism) and its people"
(majmu-ul-Fatawa Vol. 3)

According to AL-Tabari:

"Islam means obeying Allah
in what He has commanded,
believing in what He has
informed and avoiding what
He has forbidden"

(Tafsir al-Tabari - verse 3:19)

3: Definitions of Islam

According to shariah:

a) Al-Quran

" But whoever submits his face to Allah while being a doer of good — he has grasped the most trust-worthy handhold " (Quran : 31 : 22)

b) Hadith

" Islam is to testify that there is no deity except Allah and Muhammad (PBUH) is the Messenger of Allah , to establish prayer, to pay zakaat , to fast ramadan and to perform pilgrimage to the House if able "

(Sahih Muslim, Hadith 8)

c) Maulana Maududi

"Islam is the name of the complete submission of man before Allah, which results in an orderly society built upon justice, morality and peace."

Book: (Towards understanding Islam)

d) Dr. Hamidullah

"Islam is a divine system of life aiming to harmonize the individual and society with the moral will of God"

(Introduction to Islam)

Salient Features of Islam

(1)

Tawhid

(Oneness of Allah)

Believing in the oneness of Allah (Tawhid) is the first part of the Kalma and it is the

core pillar of Islam.

" Say, " He is Allah (whom) one,
Allah, the Eternal Refuge.

He neither begets nor is
born. Nor is there to
Him any equivalent "

(Quran : 112)

According to Illama Shibli
Nauman.

" Tawhid is the first
chapter of Islamic syllabus."

and,

" Islam is like a fort and
the door of that fort is
Tawhid "

(Seerah tun Nabi)

In Makkah Prophet PBUH refused to
worship idols and due to this
faced years of persecution, but

inspired the courage of early muslims like Bilal R.A, who endured torture for proclaiming "Ahad, Ahad" (One God).

2- Prophethood

The second part of Kalma declares Prophet PBUH is the messenger of Allah, affirming the belief of all prophets and the finality of Prophethood.

"Muhammad is not the father of any one of your men, but he is the messenger of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets"

(Quran 33:40)

Prophet's (PBUH) life is the practical interpretation of the Quran. His sunnah guides personal, social, political and economic conduct.

His (PBUH) mission was to enlighten hearts and mind establishing a literate and morally upright society.

Prophet (PBUH) said,

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

3) Universality

Islam's message is for all humanity. It is not limited to a race, region or era.

The constitution of Madinah guaranteed Jews and Muslims equal rights and safety.

Albanian Muslims protected Jews during WWII guided by Islamic ethics.

4) Complete Code of Life

Islam provides guidance for every part and aspect of life encompassing spiritual, social, political and legal. Prophet PBUH established zakat as a welfare system, court structure for justice and rules for trade to prevent exploitation.

5) Balance Between Spiritual and Material life

Islam avoids extremes of monasticism and materialism. It encourages earning lawfully while remembering Allah. The Prophet PBUH discouraged abandoning family for worship, teaching that balanced living is part of faith.

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6. Equality and Social Justice

In Islam, All humans are equal in dignity and superiority is only in piety.

"the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you"

(Quran : 49 : 13)

Islamic charities serve both muslims and non muslims in disaster relief worldwide.