

ISLAMIC STUDIES

LECTURE No # 01 & 02

:- TOPICS :-

(i) The Meaning of Islam

(ii) Salient features of Islam

(iii) Tauheed & Prophethood

-: Meaning and Concept of Islam :-

-: Question No # 01 :-

What is Islam? Elaborate the salient features of Islam.

start with the summary of the answer as introduction.

-: Answer :-

A journey of the soul: "The meaning of Islam"

Islam, in its complete profound sense signifies a total submission to Allah Almighty and peace. The etymological roots of Islam are grounded in the principles of complete self-surrender and peaceful capitulation to the divine will.

In the contextual framework of Islamic theology, Islam is defined as the deliberate act of submitting one's will to the divine authority of Allah Almighty for achieving spiritual tranquility and a state of profound peace.

In the Quran, Allah Almighty in Surah Ali-Imran verse 19 (3:19) states;

• ان الدين عند الله الاسلام

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

On the vertical level (God-to-man), Islam means Submission. On the horizontal level (man-to-man), Islam means peace.

Syed Ameer Ali, in his book "The spirit of Islam" defines Islam as,

"Salam, in its primary sense means to be tranquil. In its secondary sense, it means to surrender oneself to Him with whom peace is made."

This emphasizes that complete submission to Allah Almighty's will and being forever at peace is Islam.

Prophet Mohammad (SWA) mentioned in a narrative the best summary of core of Islam as ;

لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله :

"Submission means that you should bear witness that there is no God but Allah, and that Mohammad is his messenger..."

Islam : A path of peace .

In sharia, Islam is the voluntary submission to Allah's will, A path of peace chosen by one's will.

As in Surah AL-Kahf (18:29), Allah says.

فمن شاء فليؤمن ومن شاء فليكفر :

"Whoever wants, he should believe ; and whoever wants, he should disbelieve"

Adherence to Islam is an individual's conscious decision to align with divine guidance. Enhancing this divine message leads to deep inner peace as the Islam itself means peace and tranquility.

Allah in Surah - Al-Baqarah (2:256) states;

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ

(La Ikra-ha -fee al-din)

"There shall be no compulsion in (acceptance of) the religion."

A Blueprint for practice: Sunnah as the Second source of Islam.

Islam, as understood through Hadith, relies on the words of Prophet Mohammad (SWA) and actions as a secondary source after Quran.

This prophetic tradition provides a practical blueprint for Muslim life, offering specific instructions on implementing the five pillars - including Tauheed, prayer, fasting, charity and Hajj - and guiding believers on moral conduct and jurisprudence.

According to Hadith - e - Gabdiel;

إِسْلَامٌ أَنْ تَشْهَرَ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنْ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ.

Islam is to testify that there is no God but Allah and Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) is his Messenger.

The Prophet Mohammad (SWA) in reference exclaimed;

"Namaz is the only prayer that creates a distinction between a believer, and a non-believer"

According to Dr. Hameedullah;

"Islam is a monotheist religion (deen) revealed upon Prophet Mohammad (SWA)"

At an occasion, Imam Ghazali stated;

"Islam is the combination of Rights of Allah, and the Rights of man"

Moulana Sadar-ud-din Islahi in his book Islam at a Glance defines Islam as;

"Islam is the name of / collective name of two aspects; faiths and worships"

Allah in Quran has guided humanity based on Islamic notion by emphasizing akidah in Makki surah, and ibaddat in Madni Surah. In one place, in the book Sahi Bukhari of Hadith, it is stated;

ه، افما ال عمل بالنيات

Verily, indeed, deeds are only by intentions.

-: Salient features of Islam :-

(i): Tauheed: The first cornerstone of Islamic monotheism:

Tauheed, the arabic term for oneness of Allah, is the foundational principle of Islam. It is a belief system that posits that there is a single, indivisible creator and sustainer of the universe, and this belief is the core foundation of Islam.

The concept of Tauheed is best encapsulated in Surah AlIkhlâs (chapter 112)

قل هو الله احد . الله العزيم يلد ولم يولد . ولم يكن له كفوا احد .

"Say he is Allah [who is] one . Allah, the Eternal refuge . He neither begets, nor is born, nor is there to Him any equivalent"

The pillar of Tauheed :-

The belief of Tauheed permeates every aspect of an individual's life, including

(i) Core beliefs

(iii) Faiths

(ii) Worships

(iv) Systems (Financial, Economic and political)

keep the description of a single argument brief and increase the no of arguments instead.

Allama Shibli Nomanî, in his book Sirat-un-nabi explained;

- (i) Tauheed is the first chapter of Islamic symbol
- (ii) Islam is like a fort and Tauheed is its gate

These analogies in the notes, perfectly illustrates that Tauheed is the essential entry point and protective barrier of Islamic faith.

(ii) Prophethood: The Pinnacle of Guidance

The word "Prophethood", also denoted as "Risalah" in Arabic, is the second salient feature of Islam. Literally, Prophethood at roots mean "a messenger".

In Islam, Risalah refers to the divine communication of Allah's message and guidance to humanity chosen individuals.

In Quran, this has been highlighted in Surah An-Najm Chapter 53 (3-4)

وَمَا يَنْظُرُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ
إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ

Nor does he speak from [his own] inclination. It is not but a revelation revealed.

The principle that prophethood is a divine mission of conveying revelation is central to Islamic belief.

one reference is enough for a single argument.

In Surah An-Nisa (4), verse 163

إِنَّا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ كَمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى نُوحٍ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ
Indeed, We have revealed to you [O Mahammad],
as we have revealed to Noah and the
prophets after him.

(iii) Dignity to mankind

The concept of dignity of mankind (Karamah Al-Insan) is a fundamental principle in Islam, deeply rooted to the divine teachings of Almighty Allah, and his beloved messenger.

This dignity is not a social construct, but a divine endowment, establishing humanity as a unique creation honoured above all.

In Surah Al-Baqra (2:30), Allah exclaims;

“And when your Lord said to the angels, “Indeed, I will place on the Earth a successor.”

In Surah -At-Tin (95:4), Allah Almighty orders.

“They have certainly created man in the best of nature”

In another Surah Al-Isra (17:70), Allah has bestowed a direct and explicit declaration of the divine honour of all humans

“And We have certainly honoured the Children of Adam”

(iv) A complete code of life

Islam is a complete code of life, offering divine guidance for every facet of human existence, from personal conduct to social conduct.

: Upbringing

Upbringing in Islam starts from the mother - a primary source of a child's moral and social development.

"Every child is born on the natural disposition (of Islam)"

: Character building

Islam emphasizes the cultivation of noble character traits like honesty and humility.

The Prophet Mohammad (SWA) said,

"The best of you are those who have the best character."

: Collective life

Islam promotes a community's solidarity and social responsibility among all believers. Quran says;

"A single brotherhood"

(v) Islam promotes humanity:

Humanity is a core Islamic principle defined by good morals and upright conduct.

In Surah Al-Baqra (2:177), Allah states;

“Righteousness is not that you turn your faces towards the East or the West, but [true] righteousness is the one who believes in Allah, and gives wealth to relatives, orphans, the needy, the travelers, and those who ask”

add a few more arguments in this part.

Conclusion

Islam is a comprehensive and a complete code of life that offers guidance in every aspect of life. Quran and Sunnah provide a balanced framework for spiritual, social and personal conduct, ensuring a purposeful life for individuals and a just society for all.