

What is Islam? Elaborate the salient features of Islam.

Ans

Introduction

The word Islam has its roots in Arabic language. It is derived from an Arabic word "SLM سلم" which means "to surrender", "to submit", "to yield", "to give one's self up" and other meaning of Islam is "peace". Imam Raghīb al-Isfahani in his book "al-mafasdat fi Ghosab al-Quran", divided Islam into two kinds, one is simple confession with tongue and other is that along with confession it's practice in daily life. He further says, "Islam" means entering into peace. Syed Ameer Ali in his famous book "the spirit of Islam" defines Islam as, in its primary sense means peace and in secondary sense means, to

submitters to Him with whom peace is made. Dr. Hameedullah in his book "Introduction to Islam" defines Islam as monotheist deen revealed upon Holy Prophet (Peace and blessings be upon Him). According to ~~Islam~~ Iman Gazali, Islam is a combination of two concepts one is "rights of Allah" and other is "rights of people".

Contextual meaning of Islam

As it is evident from the wordly meaning of Islam that it means to submission or to submitters to the will of Allah, that submission must be voluntasily not forcefully. The other meaning of Islam is peace, one can achieve mental and body peace by submitting or submitters himself to the commands of Allah. As true love of God and submission to His commands is the guarantor of peace and harmony among His creatures. In addition to it Islam requires the obedience and submission not only in belief and mode of worship but also in ethics, morality, politics, culture, social behaviours, laws,

economic, national and international affairs both in individual and collective spheres of life. Islam has been revealed for the proper guidance of mankind. For the proper development of human life, man needs two elements, one is the resources to maintain life and fulfill the material needs and other is knowledge of principles of individual and social behaviour to enable man to fulfill himself and to maintain justice and peace in human life. For the fulfillment of these two elements of human life, the God has provided resources. For the material need, He has put all the natural resources and for his spiritual, social and cultural needs, He has sent ^{from} prophets among men and revealed to them Holy Books for the proper guidance to mankind to right path. The essence of Islamic concept of the idea that it is not enough to practice Islam in the personal life only, but that the teachings of Holy Quran and Sunnah also be implemented in their social economic and political fields. ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~social~~ ~~economic~~ ~~and~~ ~~political~~ ~~fields.~~

Salient features of Islam

Following are some basic characteristics of Islam.

① Simplicity, Rationalism and Practicalism

Islam is a religion without any mythology. The teachings of Islam are very simple and free from any irrational beliefs. The "Tawheed", "Prophethood" and "the day of judgement" are the basic articles of Islam. All are based on sound logic. All basic teachings of Islam are derived or followed from these articles of belief and are simple and straightforward. There is no concept of hierarchy of priests, no complicated rites and rituals. Everybody ~~can~~ may approach the Book of God directly and translate.

② Complete way of life

Islam is a religion which is not only limited to the personal or individual life but it is a complete code of life. It provides guidance regarding every aspect of

life, whether it is a social, political, economic, cultural or any other field of life. The Quran enjoins man to enter the fold of Islam without any reservation and to follow God's guidance in all the fields of life.

③ Universality and Humanism

The religion of Islam is universal. Its teachings are for whole mankind. God in Islam, is God of all and Prophet ~~Muhammad~~ Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him) is the messenger of Allah for the whole of mankind not for only Muslims. In Islam, all men are equal, whatever their colour, nationality, race or language is. Islam addresses its to the conscience of humanity and banishes all false barriers of race, status and wealth.

④ Permanence and change

The elements of permanence and change coexist in human society and culture and are bound to remain so. Too much emphasis on permanence makes the system rigid

and robs it of flexibility and progress, while of lack of permanent values and unchanging elements generate moral relativism, shapelessness. The Quran and Sunnah contain the eternal guidance given by the Lord. This guidance comes from the God who is free from the limitations of space and time as such as the principles of individual and social behaviour revealed by Him are based on reality. But God has revealed only broad principles and has endowed man with the freedom to apply them in every age in the way suited to the spirit and conditions of that age. It is through the Ijtihad that people of every age try to implement and apply divine guidance to the problems of their time.

⑤ Complete record of teachings preserved

Another important features of Islam is the fact that the teachings of Islam have been preserved in their original form. As a result, God's guidance is available

without adulteration of any kind. The Quran is the revealed book which has been in existence for the last 1450 years. It is still available in its original form. Detailed accounts of the life of Prophet (Peace and blessings be upon him) and of his teachings are available. There has not been one change made in this unique historic record.

Conclusion

To sum up the long story short, it can be said that, Islam is a religion which provides guidance for the every aspect of life. An individual can achieve peace and ~~be~~ success in this ~~earthly~~ mortal world and in life after death by following the teachings of Islam.