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Question: What is Islam? What are salient features of Islam?

Q What is Islam? Explain Salient features of Islam?

## Islam

Islam is a monotheistic faith which was founded in the 7th century in Arabian Peninsula. Islam has over 1.8 billion followers worldwide and is rich in culture and tradition. It was based on the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as revealed to him by angel Jibrael. At the heart of Islamic belief is Quran the Holy Book which is considered by the followers to be verbatim word of Allah, and is the final revelation by God to humanity. Islam is not just a religion but a comprehensive way of life, influencing the social, political & economic behaviors of its followers. The word "Islam" means submission, reflecting the fundamental concept of faith involving submission of one's will to the will of God.

# Salient features of Islam

Following are some of the salient features of Islam:

## Tauheed

It is at the center of Islamic beliefs. Monotheism or Tauheed is the concept of believing in the Oneness of God. It requires commitment to worship and live according to the teachings of One, singular Creator/God. Tauheed is rejection of idolatry, meaning worshipping of statues, and rejection of polytheism which is worship of more than one god.

## Prophethood / Risalat

In Islam, it is believed that God sent messengers to various nations throughout history to guide people towards the righteous path. Out of all these messengers, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is considered as the last and final messenger till the end of time.

## Quran

The Quran is regarded as the literal word of God, revealed to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) by the angel Jibrail. It serves as guidance for its followers on matters of law, personal behavior and spirituality. Its chapters are arranged by the order of length.

## Sunnah & Hadiths

Sunnah comprises of teachings and practices of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in his life, as well as his sayings (hadiths).

## The five pillars of Islam

These pillars are the foundation of Muslim practices involving declaration of faith (Shahada), prayer (Salah), zakat, fasting during Ramadan and hajj. Each pillar is intended to strengthen a Muslim's faith and character.

## Prayer

Muslims are required to pray five times a day. These prayers occur from dawn to nightfall and provide a constant connection to God and serves as time for guidance, mercy and forgiveness. It is both a display of faith and a method of maintaining spiritual discipline.

## Zakat

Zakat is a charity practice involving those that are financially able, to give a ~~portion~~ portion of ones wealth as donation to the needy to ensure economic balance as well as help those that are in need of help.

## Fasting

Fasting is observed during Ramadan and starts from dawn till sunset as a means to cultivate self discipline, spiritual growth and empathy for the less fortunate.

## Hajj

The Hajj is required of all Muslims who are physically and financially able at least once in their lives. This is done to foster a sense of unity and equality among Muslims.

## Jihad

Jihad is often translated as "holy war," but the broader Islamic ~~concept~~ context is "struggle" or "effort." It refers to the spiritual struggle against sin. It is an internal struggle against one's self to maintain faith, develop good character and fight against one's problems. As an external effort, Jihad also means to protect Islamic community against injustice and unethical treatment, albeit with strict rules of engagement.

## Shariah Law

It is an Islamic law derived from Quran and Sunnah. The law aims to help Muslims by providing guidance in all aspects of life ranging from personal conduct to communal and state laws.

## Ummah

The concept of Ummah in Islam transcends national and ~~the~~ ethnic boundaries to encompass all Muslims worldwide. The Ummah is not just a spiritual community but a political and social entity as well.

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