

Unit 1

Islam and its salient features:

INTRODUCTION:

Islam is a **Abrahamic monotheistic** religion centered on the Quran and the teachings of Muhammad (PBUH), the religion's founder. The word Islam comes from Arabic root words **Salam** (S-L-M) which means "peace and greeting".

Meaning:

- The literal meaning of Islam is to find peace, to surrender yourself and submission.
- The contextual meaning of Islam is to enter in peace by submitting to the will of Allah or submission of desires to the will of Allah.

Code name:

Code name of Islam is **Deen-e-Hanif** and the followers of Islam are known as **Muslims**. It is the second largest religion in the world after Christianity.

Shariah:

Sharia is a legal system of Islam, which is a set of religious guidelines that Muslims follow to live moral lives. The word Sharia is **Arabic** for

"the correct path" or "the clear path to water."

To practice the pillars (salat, Fast, charity, Shahadah) is also called as Islam.

Allah says in Quran:

"O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous."

• HADEES E JIBREEL :

In Hadees-e-Jibreel, Holy Prophet said that "Islam is a combination of two things i.e to bear witnesses of Allah and His messenger."

• SCHOLAR'S POINT OF VIEW :

Different scholars presented their own point of view about Islam.

According to Dr. Hameedullah :

"Islam is a monotheist deen revealed upon Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)"

According to Imam Ghazali :

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

Moreover, Moulana Sadar uddin Islahi wrote a book "Islam at a glance" in which he said that "Islam is a combination of faiths

and worships."

Holy Prophet (PBUH) said:

انما الاعمال بالنيات

"Indeed the reward of deeds depends upon the intentions"

ISLAM: A UNIVERSAL DEEN:

Islam is a universal deen because:

- It guides in every aspect of life.
- It is not limited to a specific time period.
- It is not limited to a specific geography.

This universality is seen on the event of Hajj when people from all the regions of the world pray together.

- It is not confined to a specific ethnicity.

It can be seen when Hazrat Bilal Habshi, who was an Ethiopian slave and first Mu'azzin, became the companion of Holy Prophet (PBUH)

ISLAM: FOR ENTIRE MANKIND:

Islam is for entire mankind and it is evident from the name of Islam itself i.e

I = ideal

S = system of

L = living for

A = all of

M = mankind

Even the subject of Quran is also human being
Allah says in Quran (5:32)

“ Anyone who kills an innocent person
without a valid reason is as if they
killed all of humanity and whosoever
saves a life is as if they saved
all of humanity ”

BELIEFS IN ISLAM:

Muslims believe in a number of fundamental concepts including the oneness of God (opposite of which is **Shirk**), angels, prophets, day of judgement, holy books -

قل هو الله احد .
“ Say; he is Allah the one ”

PILLARS IN ISLAM:

Muslims believe on the pillars of Islam i.e. Shahada (declaration that there is no God), Salah, Zakat, Sawm and Hajj.

Allah says in Quran (2:110)

“ And establish prayer and pay the poor alms ”

لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله .

“ There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah. ”

FEATURES OF ISLAM:

Islam has several features that makes it unique from other religions. These are as below:

1- Unique concept of Tawheed:

Tawhid comes from the Arabic word *wahhada* which means "to unite". It is the core belief of Islam which states that God is one, without parts or composition, and without a partner in his actions. The Shahadah also expresses the concept of Tawhid. Even, Surah Al-Ikhlâs captures the essence of Tawhid.

In Sirah Tun Nabi by Allama Shibli Nonami,

According to Holy Prophet:

"Tawhid is the first chapter of Islamic syllabus."

Holy Prophet (PBUH) said:

"Islam is like a fort and the gate of that fort is Tawhid."

2- Prophethood:

It is the belief that God chooses people to communicate his message to humanity. In many religions, including Islam, Christianity, Judaism, prophets are believed to be a connection between Gods and humans. Prophet teaches us what should be our way of life (Sunnah)

In Surah Ahzab, Allah says:

“ Muhammad is not the father of one of your men, but the messenger of Allah and last of prophets.”

Prophets are believed to receive divine teachings and deliver messages about God's will. After getting prophethood, Holy Prophet (PBUH) said:
Verily, I have been sent as a teacher to mankind.

In Surah Najam (53), Allah says:

“ Nor does he speak out of his desire; It is not but a revelation that is revealed.”

3- Dignity to Mankind:

Before Islam, Arabs were ignorant. They did not know how to respect an individual. Even in Subcontinent, there was a class system and lower class people were treated badly. Islam gives the inherent worth and respect to every human being regardless of their race, gender, status and religion.

In Surah Baqrah, Allah says;

“ Indeed, I am going to place in the Earth a vicegerent ”

This ayat is about the time when God told the angels that he would appoint a vicegerent on Earth. The angels asked if God would appoint someone who would cause disorder and shed blood - God responded that he knew what they didn't know.

This tells the status of human being and the advocacy of humans by God.

In Surah At-Tin,

لقد خلقنا الانسان في احسن تقويم .

“ Verily, we have created man in best regulated form ”

4. Complete code of life:

Islam is considered a complete code of life because it provides a guidance for all aspects of life, in individual as well as collective life.

• In Individual Life:

It guides about all the aspects of individual life i.e. whispering a prayer into the newborn's right ear. It tells us about character building and importance of education.

Holy Prophet said:

“ Seeking knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim. ”

It further guides about livelihood, family dynamics etc.

• In collective life:

Islam further tells us about brotherhood, justice, political system, governance and leadership, social system and even global affairs.

Allah says in Surah Al-Hujrat,

“the believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers.”

5- Promotes humanity:

Islam promotes humanity by teaching compassion, respect and justice. Humanity in Islam means equality, protection of human and animal rights, provision of medical services, protection of environment etc.

Holy Prophet said:

“Don't waste water even if you were at a running stream.”

- CHALLENGES:

Islam faces a number of challenges like:

→ Islamophobia: Negative stereotypes about Islam

→ Threat to Islamic identity: Muslims must adapt to a rapidly changing world while preserving Islamic values.

→ Internal sectarianism: means the divisions and conflicts that exist within the Muslim community itself.