

## **Salient features of Islam.**

### **1. Unique concept of Tauheed**

The concept of **Tauheed**, which is the belief in the Oneness of Allah, holds a unique and central place in Islam. The first part of the Shahada (Kalma) emphasizes that there is only one God, Allah, and nothing else is worthy of worship. This is further reinforced in Surah Al-Ikhlās (112:1-4), where Allah is described as "One and Indivisible," the "Sustainer of all," who has neither offspring nor was born, and there is none comparable to Him. Tauheed is the core belief in Islam, encompassing everything from belief in the Last Prophet, angels, holy books, and the afterlife, all of which are rooted in Allah's will. Additionally, even acts of worship, rituals like Nikah and Janaza, and all systems—whether political, financial, or economic—are based on the foundation of Allah's Oneness. To emphasize the significance of Tauheed, Allama Shibli Naumani, in his book *Sirah-tun-Nabi*, quotes two hadiths:

1. The Prophet (SAW) said, "Tauheed is the first chapter of the Islamic syllabus."
2. "Islam is like a fort, and the gate of the fort is Tauheed."

These quotes highlight the fundamental and irreplaceable role Tauheed plays in the structure of Islam.

### **2. Prophethood**

The second part of the Kalma, "I bear witness that Muhammad is His Messenger," underscores the pivotal role of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in Islam. As stated in Surah Al-Ahzab (33:40), "Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but is the Messenger of Allah and the seal of the prophets. And Allah has perfect knowledge of all things." This highlights the finality of prophethood in Islam, where Muhammad (SAW) is the last and final messenger sent by Allah. His way of life, as exemplified in the Sunnah, serves as a model for all Muslims. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) himself emphasized the importance of education and law, saying, "Verily, I have been sent as a teacher to make laws and rules." The primary sources of Islamic teachings are the Quran and Sunnah. Surah An-Najm (53:3-4) further clarifies that the Prophet (SAW) did not speak from his own desires but conveyed only the revelation sent to him by Allah: "Nor does he speak of his own whims, it is only a revelation sent down to him." In Surah Al-Ahzab (33:21), the Prophet (SAW) is described as the ultimate role model: "Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah you have an excellent example for whoever has hope in Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah often." This verse emphasizes the exemplary conduct of the Prophet, making him the perfect guide for those striving to live a righteous life.

### **3. Dignity to mankind**

Islam has bestowed unparalleled dignity upon mankind, elevating the status of humans in ways that were absent before its advent. Prior to Islam, respect and dignity were often withheld from certain groups. In pre-Islamic Arabia, slaves were treated with disdain, while in India, the lower castes, particularly the Shudras, were seen as inferior due to their social status. However, Islam brought about a profound transformation. In Surah Al-Baqarah (2:30), Allah says, "Remember when your Lord said to the angels, 'I am going to place a successive human authority on earth.'" The angels questioned Allah, wondering if He would create someone who would spread corruption and shed blood. Allah replied, "I know what you do not know," emphasizing the special status of humankind. Allah appointed humanity as His caliph (vicegerent) on earth, granting them a unique role in creation.

This concept of dignity is reinforced in Surah At-Tin, where Allah declares that He has made mankind the best of creation. Additionally, Surah Al-Isra (17:70) states, "Certainly, We have honored the children of Adam," highlighting the inherent dignity of all humans. Islam recognizes the equality of all people, regardless of religion, gender, or social status. Both Muslims and non-Muslims, as well as men and women, are honored equally. In Surah Al-Imran (3:26), Allah says, "You honor whoever You please and disgrace whom You please," reminding us that respect and dignity ultimately lie in the hands of Allah. This comprehensive view of human dignity is central to Islam's teachings, promoting equality and respect for all of humanity.

#### 4. Islam is Complete code of life

Islam is a comprehensive and complete code of life, offering guidance for every aspect of life, both individually and collectively.

**Individual life** in Islam is deeply structured and meaningful. From birth, Islam begins guiding a person, as the Azan is recited in the newborn's ears. The upbringing of children is highly emphasized, with the mother being recognized as the first teacher and the mosque serving as a place of learning. At the age of seven, children are encouraged to go to the mosque to learn and socialize. Character development is also integral to individual growth; the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is the model for moral and ethical behavior, and his character should be followed for a better upbringing. Education is a key component of Islam, with the pursuit of knowledge being obligatory for every Muslim. Islam also provides guidance on livelihood, with Surah Al-A'raf (7:10) reminding us that Allah has established us on earth and provided the means for our sustenance, yet many fail to express gratitude for it. The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) himself was involved in business, teaching that work and trade are part of the Islamic way of life. Family life is another important aspect, where Islam outlines the rights and responsibilities of spouses, parents, and children, ensuring a balanced and harmonious home environment.

**Collective life** in Islam is also well-defined, with guidance on how to interact with society as a whole. Islam provides a complete social system, where the rights and duties of neighbors, for example, are clearly outlined. In the political realm, Islam establishes a political system, with the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) serving as a diplomat and leader who guided his community with justice and fairness. The financial system in Islam, including rules for transactions, charity, and wealth distribution, ensures equity and social welfare. Justice is a cornerstone of Islamic teachings, ensuring fairness for all individuals in society. Islam's guidance extends to global affairs, promoting peace, mutual respect, and cooperation between nations.

In sum, Islam is a complete way of life, offering timeless guidance that spans individual development, family structure, social relationships, and even global governance. It is a holistic system that leads to personal fulfillment and societal harmony.

#### 5. Islam promotes Humanity

Islam places a strong emphasis on **humanity**, and in the 21st century, this focus is more relevant than ever, as humanity is prioritized above all. Islam is described as a universal **deen**, and for over 1400 years, it has upheld the importance of humanity in its teachings.

Islam encourages individuals to behave with **kindness** and **good manners** toward others. The Quran, in Surah Al-Hujurat (49:1-15), highlights the importance of good behavior and treating others with respect,

emphasizing values such as avoiding gossip, backbiting, and discord. In Surah Al-Humazah (104:1), it is said that the "perfect believers are those who are best in character," which underscores the central role of integrity and compassion in a Muslim's life.

**Charity** is another key element of Islam's promotion of humanity. Islam teaches that the best form of financial help is charity, and one of the most significant forms of charity is **zakat**. Zakat is a mandatory act of giving to those in need and is intended to eradicate poverty. The distribution of zakat is clearly structured, and it cannot be used for the mosque or the Prophet (SAW) and his ancestors. Instead, its first recipients are **relatives**, followed by **neighbors**, and then those in need within the broader community.

**Medical services** are also deeply rooted in Islamic principles. In Surah Al-Maidah (5:32), it is stated that "killing one person is like killing all of humanity; and saving one person is like saving all of humanity." This powerful verse reflects Islam's commitment to protecting and preserving life. Additionally, a **Hadith Qudsi** reveals that Allah expresses displeasure toward those who neglect visiting the sick, which is why visiting the ill is regarded as an act of worship in Islam.

Islam also encourages extensive **social work**. Dr. Wasiullah M. Abbas, a professor at Al-Azhar University in Egypt, wrote a book outlining the key features of Islam, particularly its emphasis on social service and helping others. In his work, he highlights the importance of selfless service to society, a value that is deeply ingrained in Islamic teachings and practices.

In conclusion, Islam promotes humanity through its teachings on kindness, charity, the protection of life, and social service, ensuring that humanity is always at the forefront of a Muslim's actions and intentions.

## **6. Protection of human rights**

Islam emphasizes the **protection of human rights** and advocates for the rights of all individuals, including laborers, women, and others. In his **Farewell Sermon**, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) highlighted the importance of upholding the rights of mankind, stressing that all individuals, regardless of their status, should be treated with dignity and respect. He reminded the Muslim community to safeguard these rights and act justly toward one another.

The Prophet (SAW) also set examples through his actions. For instance, he reprimanded a Jew for neglecting the rights of a camel, which was left thirsty and in need of water, showing that Islam calls for compassion and care towards all living beings. In another instance, the Prophet (SAW) described a woman who was condemned to hell because she allowed a cat to die from hunger and thirst, highlighting the severity of neglecting the welfare of animals and the responsibility every individual holds for the care of living beings.

Islam also emphasizes the **protection of the environment**. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) instructed Muslims not to cut down trees, even in times of war, underscoring the importance of preserving nature. In fact, planting trees is considered a form of **charity** (Sadaqah) in Islam, further reinforcing the idea that environmental stewardship is a vital part of the faith.

In conclusion, Islam calls for the protection of human rights, compassionate treatment of all creatures, and respect for the environment, making these principles integral to the Muslim way of life