

Assignment: M. Suhail-82

LMS: 40223

What is Islam? and elaborate the salient features of Islam.

Literal Meaning of "Islam":

Allah says in the Quran, (3:83) "وَأَنِ اسْلَمِ" in Arabic

Translation: And to Him alone submits whoever is there in the heavens and the earth.

This ayah refers to the very literal meaning of the word Islam, which is "submission". "Islam" (إسلام) is originated from its root word "Salam" (سلم) which means "peace", "to surrender" and "to submit". These literal meanings of the word Islam reflect in its contextual meanings, which are explained in the following lines.

Contextual Meaning of "Islam":

① The word "Islam" means

"Submission to the will of Allah".

② This term is also used for the meaning, "to enter in peace by submitting to Allah". And this is what Allah says in the Quran;

فَإِذَا أُنْزِلَ مِنْ رَبِّي آيَةٌ فَإِنَّهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ
فَلَا تَخَفْ وَلَا تَحْزَنْ

Translation: "And then should come the guidance to you from Me, and the ones who follow My guidance shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve."

So, in the Shar'iah point of view, "Islam" means "to willfully and voluntarily submit to the will of Allah and be in peace."

After elaborating the literal and contextual meaning of the word "Islam" "the religion, Islam" is defined -

Definition of Islam;

The best source for the definition of Islam is the Messenger of Allah, the sole oral testimony of the existence of God. Nabi SAW has defined Islam in his famous hadees named "Hadees-e-Jibreel

It is:

عن عبد الله بن عباس قال: قال جبريل لما أتى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ذات يوم إن دخل عليك، قل: شهادتان: شهادة أن لا إله إلا الله، شهادة أن محمدًا رسول الله، لا تروى عنه أثر المسقوف ولا يعرفه من أحد - فجلس إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فأتمم كتابه، وأل كتابه ووضع كفيه على فخذيه فقال: يا محمد أخبرني عن الإسلام. فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: الإسلام أن تشهد أن لا إله إلا الله وأن محمدًا رسول الله وأن تقوم الصلاة وتؤتي الزكاة وتطعم المسكين وتحتجب البنت بأن استطعت وإليه سبيل - فقال: صدقت - - - (الخ).

In this quoted hadees, when Jibreel asked the Nabi that he should tell him about Islam, The Messenger

of Allah counted the following constituents of Islam;

① witnesses of Allah and his messenger.

And

② To establish the pillars of Islam, which are, the prayers (Salah), the fasts of Ramazan, paying Zakah and to perform Hajj, if he is able to.

As defined by a renowned Islamic Scholar, Dr. Hameedullah, Islam is a monotheist din revealed upon Prophet Muhammad SAW. While the world famous Imam Ghazali defines Islam as a combination of the rights of Allah and the rights of people.

And about this explained "Islam" Allah says;

إِنَّمَا دِينُ الْإِسْلَامِ

Translation: Indeed, Religion with Allah is Islam.

Salient Features of Islam:

Following explained are few unique features of Islam which distincts it from other religions;

1) Unique Concept of Monotheism

While some other religion too present some sort of monotheist concept about god, but the concept of monotheism in Islam is the perfect one, unique and logical. Only and only Allah is the God, the Creator and the Sustainer. Only He is attributed all the godly powers and qualities. Doing otherwise is strictly prohibited. This is what the Nabi called the first chapter of Islam, as mentioned by Allama Shibli Nomani in his book "Seerat-un-Nabi".

أشهد أن لا اله إلا الله

Witnessing the oneness of Almighty Allah is the gateway to Islam.

In the Quran, Allah says;

(112:1) قُلْ اِلٰهٌ اَحَدٌ

Translation: "Say, the truth is, Allah is one."

And Allah says;

لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا اِلٰهًا ثَلَاثَةٌ
مِنْ اِلٰهٍ لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ

Translation: "Indeed, They have disbelieved who said, 'Allah is the third of Three', while there is no god but only One God."

This monotheism is the speciality of Islam.

2 The Last Prophethood:-

Allah says in Surah Al-Ahzab

مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ ابْنُ اَبِي هٰبَةَ وَاَكُنْ
مِنْ اٰبَاءِ النَّبِيِّ (٢١)

Translation: "Muhammad is not the father of anyone of

Your men, but he is the messenger of Allah and the last of all prophets...."

This belief of the last prophethood of Muhammad SAW is the second most important feature of Islam.

And, this belief is followed by the obligation of following the messenger of Allah.

Allah says in the Quran;

قُلْ إِن كُم مِّنْ أَحِبِّينَ إِلَى اللَّهِ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحِبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ

(3:31) ... اللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّبِعِينَ

Translation: "Say, if you Love Allah follow me, Allah will love you."

And when the Messenger is ordered to be followed, he is set a role model for the believers;

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّبِعُوا اللَّهَ وَاتَّبِعُوا الرَّسُولَ فَعَلَّامٌ

Translation: "There is indeed a good model for you in the messenger of Allah."

3) Dignity of Mankind:

Majority of the religions of the world give some specific kind of class system, where some are dignified and the rest, degraded. And even if a religion does not provide any class difference, it still lacks the attribute given to the mankind, without distinction, by Islam. Allah says in The Quran;

﴿إِنَّا كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ﴾
Translation: "Indeed, We have bestowed dignity upon the children of Adam."

And Nabi explained it further in his address and sermon on Hajjatul Wada.

So the dignity and respect which Islam gives human is very comprehensive and special.

4) Complete Code of Life:

Islam is not like the other religions of the world. While it gives complete guidance for the individual life of its followers, it also addresses the social, political and economic systems of the Muslims. It is a complete code of life. It spares no aspect of life.

Islam gives purpose to an individual. A person, aiming at that purpose, seeks to please Allah and behave accordingly. This strengthens his spirit, grooms his morals and makes him a good human. And a collection of such high valued people constitute a very healthy society.

Then, Islam guides us to the social conduct of a Muslim society. Nabit is set a model for the believers. He taught us how to be

... a good husband, a good father,
a good neighbour, a good
friend and all. And yet not
finished, He explained and
demonstrated that how
should a leader be, He
practically taught us that
how a military Commander
should behave. And through
him, Allah gave us the
best social, political and
economic systems. This
perfection is a bright
feature of Islam.

Conclusion:-

Shortly, Islam
means the submission to the
will of Allah by following
his messenger. Witnessing
the core beliefs of Islam,
if we followed the Nabi
and constituted the political,
social and economic systems
of Islam in our lives and
societies, we would become
the true followers of Islam.