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QUESTION

What is Islam. Elaborate the salient features of Islam.

① INTRODUCTION:

The word "Islam" means peace and submission; submission to the moral imperatives of the one and only Allah, and peace with His creatures. On the vertical level, between Allah and man Islam means submission, while on the horizontal level, the relation between man to man, Islam means peace. To testify the Oneness of Allah and belief in Last Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) form the basis of the Islamic belief. It is based ^{on} ~~of~~ the equality of mankind and provides guidance in the individual as well as collective spheres.

② MEANING AND CONCEPT OF ISLAM

- Literal Meaning: Islam is derived from ^{from} ~~and~~ Arabic word "سلم" "slm" meaning peace + submission

- Contextual Meaning: To enter in peace by submitting to the will of Allah
- Meaning according to the Shariah:
Voluntary ^{submission of} desire to the will of Allah

Dr. Hamidullah defines Islam in his book "Introduction to Islam as follow:

Islam is a monoethist deen revealed upon the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

Similarly, Maulana Sador-ud-din Islahi, writes about Islam as:

Islam is a composition of two things: faiths and worships

② BUILDING BLOCKS OF ISLAM:

The Islamic belief system is based on the belief on five principles

- (i) Belief in the Oneness of Allah
- (ii) Belief on Prophethood
- (iii) Belief on Life after Death
- (iv) Belief on Angels

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(v) Belief on the Revealed Books

Whosoever professes these beliefs is a Muslim. All of these concepts are epitomized in the Kalima

There is no god but Allah:
Muhammad (PBUH) is His
Prophet

③ PILLARS OF ISLAM:

Pillars of
Islam

Testify Oneness of Allah and
the Last Prophet (PBUH)

Offering Prayers

Payment of Zakat

Performing Hajj

Observing fast in Ramadan

Hazrat Umar bin al-Khattab (R.A)

narrates that Allah's apostle (PBUH) said

"Islam is based on five principles:

To testify the Oneness of Allah
and Muhammad (PBUH) is Allah's

Messenger; to offer prayers; to pay
zakat; to perform Hajj; and to
observe fast during the month of
Ramadan"

④ SALIENT FEATURES OF ISLAM

Islam provides a comprehensive way of life covering the sacred and the secular aspects. It comprises of the following salient features

(4.1) Unique Concept of Tawheed:

Tawheed means to testify that there is no god but Allah, He is One and Unique and there is none like him.

Say: He is Allah the One
Allah is eternal and Absolute
None is born of him and
nor was He born
And there is none like Him
(Surah Ikhlas)

The concept of Tawheed forms the core pillar of Islam. It is a primary prerequisite to enter the fold of Islam

Allama Shibli Noumani writes in Sirat un-Nabi that:

Tawheed is the first chapter of Islamic Syllabus

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(4.2) Finality of Prophethood:

Allah has sent numerous Prophets throughout history for the guidance of mankind. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is the Last Messenger of Allah and that there will be no more prophets after him.

Muhammad is not the father
of anyone of you men and
he is the seal of prophethood
(33:40)

The teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) provide guidance and are universal. It is mentioned in the Holy Quran that:

Your companion does not err,
nor does he go astray; Nor
does he speak out of desire
(An Najm: 3-4)

(4.3) Divinely Revealed Ideology:

Islam is a divinely revealed ideology revealed on the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

The Holy Quran says:

O children of Adam! If there comes to you a Messenger from among you, relating to you My communication, then whoever shall guard against evil and act aright — they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve
(7:35)

(4.4) Islam Ensures Dignity of Mankind :

Islam promotes equality of all humans, regardless of race, status and gender. Islam emphasizes justice and fairness in all walks of life. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) said in his Last Sermon

There is no superiority of an Arab over a non-Arab, nor of a non-Arab over an Arab except in piety
(The Last Sermon)

Islam restored the dignity of mankind and abolished all kinds of racial and social discrimination.

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The Holy Quran Says

"O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes, so that you may know one another. Verily, the most honorable of you with Allah is the most righteous"
(49:13)

(4.5) Islam is a Complete Code of life:

Islam deals with the individual as well as collective life of human being. It is a source of guidance in all aspects of life.

Surely this Quran guides to that which is upright and gives good news to the believers who do good that they shall have a great reward
(Al-Quran)

(4.6) Islam Promotes Humanity.

Islam is a religion of peace and promotes humanity. It enjoins upon

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Muslims to fulfill the rights of others.

And in their wealth and possession
the beggar and the needy have
due share (51:19)

The perfect among the believers
are those who are best in
Character

(Al-Hadith)

(4.6) Islam Promotes Peaceful Co-existence:

Islam is a religion of peace
and co-existence. It allows freedom of
religion. Allah says in the Holy Quran:

There is no compulsion in
religion

(2:256)

(4.7) Concept of Accountability and Afterlife:

Islam teaches that this life is
a test and that everyone will be judged
according to their deeds on the Day
of Judgement.

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Allah says in the Holy Quran

So whoever does an atom's
worth of good will see it
and whoever does an atom's
weight of evil will see it

(Al-Quran 99:7-8)

⑤ CONCLUSION:

To conclude, Islam is a religion of peace and requires submission to the will of Allah in individual and collective aspects of life. Islam is a complete way of life covering spiritual, moral, social and economic aspects. It emphasizes faith, justice, peace and equality for all mankind.
