

What is Islam(?) Elaborate the Salient features of Islam?

Islam word came from arabic word 'aslama' Submit (to God). This word was first time used by Allah in Quran whereas the old name of Islam was **deen-e-hanif** which means the religion of pure monotheism. The literal meaning of Islam is **peace, submission and surrender**. which means Islam is a deen in which we enter in peace by our own will -

• Contextual Meaning

Every command of Allah leads us towards Islam. Islam means to enter in peace by submitting to the will of Allah. for example we do Jihad to eradicate terrorism. Another contextual meaning of Islam is :

"the submission of desires to the will of Allah"

• Shariah and meaning of Islam

Shariah gives a human more empowerment - The primary source of Shariah is Quran and then the second one is Sunnah. Allah says in the Holy Quran, Surah Baqarah:

الأمر في الدين

"There is no compulsion in the
choice of deen"
(2:256)

In another verse in Surah Qafiroon, Allah says:

"For you is your deen; For us
is our deen."

We submit ourselves at our own will on the
belief in one God and the teachings of Prophet
Muhammad (P.B.U.H)

• Holy Prophet and Hadees e Jibreel

Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) said that to bear
witness of Allah and His messenger --- and
then to establish and practice the pillars
of Islam in Hadees-e-Jibreel. The five
pillars of Islam are Shahada (kalma),
prayer, Zakat, Fasting and Hajj. Prophet
Muhammad also said:

"It is the only prayer that
creates distinction between a
believer and non-believer."
(Hadees)

So by believing in one Allah who is all-powerful
and all-knowing and by believing in His last

Prophet (P.B.U.H) and to practice five pillars of deen is Islam.

• Scholar : Dr. Hamidullah

We know Greek mythology as they believe in one God. Sikhs and Qadiani also believe in one God. Dr. Hamidullah gives a clear distinction between our religion and others upon believing in one God. He says:

"Islam is a monotheist deen revealed upon Prophet Muhammad PBUH."

• Scholar: Imam Gazali

Islam is also defined by Imam Gazali. He says

"Islam is a combination of Haqqul Allah and Haqqul Ibad."

Haqqul Allah refers to the rights of God while Haqqul-Ibad refers to the rights of people. We can also see that the Holy Quran talks about these two rights as a whole.

• Islam is a universal deen

It is a universal deen because it guides us in every aspect of life. It tells individuals how to live a life, how to perform duties and rights and even how to behave in social community. It is also a universal deen because it is not limited for a time period - It comes till the day of Judgement. Moreover, it is not confined to a specific ethnicity it's for the whole mankind. As in Hinduism Brahmin can only be made by birth whereas Islam is not limited to any ethnicity.

"O humanity! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female, and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may get to know one another"

(Surah Hujrat - Al Quran)

• Islam for entire mankind

Islam is for entire mankind along with its universality. Allah mentions the word Humanity, O Mankind! In Holy Quran which shows that He is addressing whole mankind - Even in the start of Quran in Surah Fatihah He addresses people as:

الحمد لله رب العالمين

"All praise for Allah - Lord of all worlds.

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Islam is an ideal system of living for all mankind - We can say that the title of the Holy Quran is mankind - In farewell sermon, Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) also declared the universality and entirety of Islam -

"All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over black nor a black has any superiority over white except taqwa and good action."

(Hadees)

Allah also says in Holy Quran in Surah Al-maidah:

وَمَنْ حَبَّ لِنَفْسِهِ أَنْ يَحْيِ بَشْرًا مِثْلَ بِرِّهِ

"And whoever saves a life, it will be as if they saved all humanity."
(5:32)

Allah and Prophet also declare the entirety of Islam for whole mankind - To believe in tawheed, prophet-hood, Holy Quran, Angels and on the day of judgement is called Islam -

• Salient Features of Islam

The salient features of Islam are Tauheed (belief in one God, Allah and His last messenger of Allah), Prophethood, belief on prayer, Charity, Fasting and pilgrimage. It also provides:

- Dignity to mankind
- Complete code of life
- Promote humanity
- Comprehensive ethical and legal framework for life

(i) Tauheed : Essence of Islam

According to the definition of Prophet Mo (P.B.U.H) Tauheed is our first part of Kalma. It is the core belief of Islam. We believed in faiths due to tauheed same as we believed in prophets, day of Judgement, worships and rituals due to Allah. Allah says in Surah Ikhlas:

قل هو الله احد
الله الصمد
له يد ولا يله
يد ولا يد
يكن الله كذا اخر -

Say: He is Allah - One,
Allah the self-sufficient
He neither begets nor is born,
Nor is there to Him any
equivalent

(112: 1-4)

Based on surah al-Imran we can differentiate Islam from Christianity and Judaism. Christians says that Hazrat Essa is the son of Allah whereas Judaism says Izra (Hazrat Uzair) is son of Allah but being a muslim we say that he is neither begets nor be born.

In a book by Allam Shibli Nomani "Sirat-un-Nabi" he says:

"Touheed is the first chapter of Islamic syllabus"

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

Touheed is a distinctive feature of Islam that differentiate Islam (deen) from others Religions.

(ii) Second part of Kalma: Prophethood

Finality of prophethood is also a salient feature of Islam. Prophet taught us about the way of life through **Sunnah**. After claiming prophethood he claimed:

"Verily, I have been sent as a teacher to mankind"

(Hadees)

We learn rules from Him also a primary source of Shariah is also Sunnah. He is our role model in every aspect of life as he taught Islam through his practical life.

Allah says in Surah Azab:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ

"Indeed, in the messenger of Allah you have an excellent example for anyone"
(33: 21)

(iii) Islam provides dignity to mankind

Before Islam, people were treated brutally. Women were buried alive. Persian and Roman civilizations were doing the trade (sale and purchase) of slaves. Islam gives people a special dignity without any difference. Allah didn't say dignity to a man or only a woman but for whole mankind. In Quran Allah says:

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ

"Indeed, we created humans in the best form."

Surah tin (95: 4)

In Surah Bani Israel, Allah says:

"Certainly, we have honored the children of Adam"

(17: 70)

Allah also ordered the angels and their groups to prostrate before Adam.

(iv) Complete code of life

Islam guides us in every aspect of life that's why it is a salient feature of Islam. It guides us how to do character building of a child. It emphasize us on education. Prophet (P.B.U.H) said:

**Seeking knowledge is obligatory
for every Muslim.**
(Hadees)

Islam also guides us about our livelihood, our family life, individual and collective life. Moreover, it guides us in political, financial and justice system and also till the global affairs. So, it's a complete code of life to this extent that it guides us from a birth of a child to global affairs in each aspect of life.

(V) Islam provides humanity

Islam is a universal deen which is till the day of judgement. So it teaches us about humanity also. We see in our contemporary life of 21st century world is working on human rights specially on women, children, slave and animals rights. But, Islam guides us about this 1400 years ago. Islam teaches us to display good morals and characters first.

**"The perfect among the believers
are those who are best in character"**
(Hadees)

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To be characterful is called humanity. We can see it by being good at character, by doing **Charity** because it is mention in Surah Bakarah

"Muslims are those who give wealth in spite of love for it."

(2 : 177)

Then there is **zakat** which is the right of your relatives first and then your neighbours. Then there is **social services** which is a form of humanity too. A professor of Egypt university **Dr. Waliullah M. Abbay** says in his book "key feature of Islam"

"The foremost and greatest virtue of Islam is the practise of social services."

Provision of medical services and fulfilments of human rights is also a form of humanity which is a distinctive feature of Islam -

Conclusion

In Islam there is no compulsion in the choice of deen and through it we enter in peace by submitting our wills to Allah - Tauheed, prophethood, pillars of Islam (Prayer, fasting, Zakat, Tauheed, hajj), and its different salient features make this deen distinctive from all other religions in the world.