

Q What is the meaning of Islam? What are its salient features?

The Literal, ^{and contextual} meaning of Islam.

Islam is an Arabic word and denotes submission, surrender and obedience.

The other literal meaning of Islam is 'peace' and this signifies that one can achieve real peace of body and of mind only to submission and obedience to Allah.

The word Islam is from the word SLM (pronounced slim) which means "to surrender", or "to yield". The contextual meaning of Islam is "submission of desire to the will of Allah" or "to enter in peace by submitting to the will of Allah."

The meaning of Islam according to Sharah
voluntarily entering in the teaching of
Islam is called (Shariah)

"Let there be no compulsion in religion, for the truth stands out clearly from false hood. (2:256)

According to Prophet (P.B.U.H),

It is only the prayers that create distinguish between a believer and non-believer

The divine injunctions of Islam is basically the submission to the Almighty.

Salient Features of Islam.

1. Tauheed, a unique concept

قل هو الله احد
الله الصمد له يد
ولم يولد ولم يكن له كفوا احد

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.

Tauhid is a revolutionary concept of Islam and constitutes the essence of the teachings of Islam. It means that there is one Supreme Lord of universe. He is Omnipotent, Omnipresent and the sustainer of the world and the mankind. As Prophet (P.B.U.H) has said.

~~According to~~ Islam is like a fort and the gate of that fort is Tauheed.

All other teachings of Islam, including the worships and rituals are rooted in this unique concept of Islam.

2. The Prophethood.

The second part of Kalima signifies the importance of prophethood and its finality. Believe in a prophet means to believe in his message, to accept the Law which he gave and to follow the code of conduct which he taught. (Dr. Hameedullah)

The second most important postulate of Islam is to believe in the prophethood of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) to accept the religion which he presented and follow as command. As Prophet (P.B.U.H) himself mentioned "Verily I have been sent as a teacher to mankind."

He is an exemplary role model (33:21)

3. Dignity to Mankind.

Before the arrival of Islam, there was immense discrimination in the society. Women and slaves were treated inhumanely. Islam gave everyone equal status and designated 'man as caliph' on Earth. Indeed, we have dignified the children of Adam, called them on land and sea, granted them good and lawful provisions
Al-Isra - 70

4. A complete code of life

Islam encompasses every aspect of a man's life from birth to death. Through the Prophet's (P.B.U.H) teachings and Quran, Allah has enlightened mankind regarding their dealings.

Prophet (P.B.U.H)'s morals and character are an embodiment of Holy Quran. - Hazrat Ayesha (R.A)

The character-building, livelihood, family life - all are well-catered in Islam. Islam also enlightens man in his public life, presenting social and political systems based on equality & justice.

5. Islam promotes humanity.

Humanity is the natural instinct of a man.

HUMANITY IS BEING CHARACTERFUL

It covers ~~both~~ every right including Animals and environment rights.

O believer! Do not let some men ridicule others, they may be better than them, nor let some women ridicule other women, they may be better than them. (Surah Hujurat 11)

The perfect among the believers are those who are best in character. (P.B.U.H)

Charity

Charity is humanity. It is crucial to maintain balance in a society. Its importance can be deciphered from the fact that Hazrat Abu Bakr performed Jihad against the people who didn't give Zakat.

...The Righteous are those who believe in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Books and the prophets, who give charity out of their cherished wealth to relatives, orphans, the poor, - - - (Surah Bakra, 188)

3. Social Work

Social work is also a part of Islam.

A scholar at the Jamiah-ul-Azhar named Muhammad Abbas wrote a book named "Key Features of Islam". He called it the practice of social services.

4. Provision of Medical services

Islam pays especial attention towards the disease-ridden individuals. According to a Hadees-e-Qudsi,

Allah shows a displeasure to a person who never visits an ill person.

Allah mentioned in Surah Maidah, Verse 32
Whoever saves a life, it will be as if they saved all of humanity.

5. Protection of Human Rights

The grant of human rights could be deciphered from the fact that Prophet (P.B.U.H) laid emphasis on the upliftment and protection of the weaker individuals of society. It was a moment of end of racism as well.

A white has no superiority over black nor a black has a superiority over white except piety and good actions.

6. Animal Rights

Islam has emphasized a lot of animal rights. From the life of Prophet (P.B.U.H) we can see his kindness towards animals.

No Muslim plants a tree or sows a seed and then a bird, or a human, or an animal eats from it but that it is charity for him (Muslim)

7. Environment Protection

Because every part of creation is dependent on another part of creation, we harm the entire systems when we damage one of its elements. It is not even permissible to harm a tree in time of war.

Look at each of its fruits when it yields & [at] its ripening. Indeed, in that are signs for people who believe [6:99]

6. Simplicity, Practicality and Rationality in Islam

- Islam's teachings are simple and intelligible.
- It is free from superstitious and irrational beliefs. All the basic articles of Islam are based on reason and sound logic. ~~They~~ They are simple and straightforward to follow.
- Allah does not accept belief if it is not expressed in deeds, and does not accept deeds if they do not conform to belief (Tabarani)

7. Does not have a hierarchy.

There is no hierarchy of priests, no farfetched abstractions, no complicated rites and rituals. Everybody may approach the Quran directly and translate its dictates into practice ... that the meanings of revelations become manifest to those who have knowledge (6:97)

8. No empty theorizing in Islam

Islam is a practical religion and does not allow indulgence in empty and futile theorizing.

It says that faith is not mere profession of beliefs, but rather that it is the very mainspring of life. Religion is something to be practiced and not an object of mere lip-service.

Those who believe and act righteously, joy is for them, and a blissful home to return to (13:29)

9. Unity of Matter and Spirit

A unique feature of Islam is that it does not divide life into watertight compartments of matter and spirit. It stands not for denial of life, but for the fulfillment of life. Islam does not ask man to avoid material things. It holds that spiritual elevation is to be achieved by living piously in the tumble of life.

O our Lord! Give us something fine in this world as well as something in the hereafter (2:201)

10. Islam is international

Islam is international in its outlook & does not admit distinctions based on colour, cast, creed. Islam wants to unite the whole

