

Q: 1- Meaning and Concept of Islam?

1- Introduction: Islam is one of the world's largest and most influential monotheistic religion that originated in the 7th century in Arabia. It is based on the teachings of the prophet (P.B.U.H) and the holy book, the Quran. Muslims believe in One God (Allah) and follow the five pillars of Islam. Word 'Islam' means submission and peace: submission of moral imperatives to one and only 'God', and peace with His Creatures. On the ~~vertical~~ Vertical Level (God-to-man relationship) Islam means submission on the horizontal level (man-to-man) Islam means peace. In its purest sense Islam is nothing but the act of loving God devoutly and being just and benevolent to His Creatures. True love of God and submission to His commands is the guarantor of peace and harmony among His Creatures. Allah is 'Al-Salam' which is one name of Allah among His 99 most beautiful names. It means He is the source and originator of all peace, the peace that needs to permeate in every aspect especially in human society. Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) used to recite following supplication after performing obligatory prayers, and a Muslim is recommended to do the same. It states "O Allah, you are peace and from you emanates all peace, blessed are you, O possessor of majesty and honour."

The very first verse of the Quran, "In the

name of Allah, the most merciful, the most Compassionate", is an emblem of love, mercy, and compassion. The same theme of love and mercy is continuously repeated through out Quran as this verse is repeated in the Quran 114 times. The Quran refers to Islam as 'the path to peace'.

2. Literal meaning of Islam: The literal meaning of Islam is "Submission" or "Surrender". The word Islam is derived from Arabic word 'S-L-M' meaning peace submission and surrender. In the religious context, Islam refers to the submission of the will of Allah. Submission involves following God's Commandments, living a righteous life, and surrendering one's ego and desires to God's wisdom and guidance. Imam Raghīb al-Isfahani says: "Islam, in law, is of two kinds; One is simple confession with the tongue. The other is that along with ~~confession~~ Confession there is belief in the heart". Imam Raghīb further says "Islam" means entering into salam, and salam and silm both signify peace".

3. Contextual Meaning: In a contextual sense, Islam refers to a monotheistic faith that encompasses:

(i) - Way of Life: Islam is way of Comprehensive life, that guides its followers in spiritual, moral, and practical aspect.

- (ii) - Monotheism: Islam emphasizes the Oneness of God (Tawhid), affirming that there is no worthy of worship except Allah.
- (iii) - Submission to God's will: Muslims believe in the submitting to God's Commandments as revealed in the Quran and through the teachings of the prophet Muhammed (P.B.U.I.).
- (iv) - Guidance for humanity: Guidance on how to live a righteous life, treat others with kindness and justice, and cultivate a strong relationship with God.

4. Concept of Islam: The core idea of Islam is the total submission to God's will. Muslims believe that Allah is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, and everything that happens is under His control.

"Whoever wants, he should believe: and whoever wants he should disbelieve".

(Surah Al-Kahf 18:29)

Those who believe the code revealed by God are considered as Muslims (believers), while those who decline to follow the same are considered as Kuffar (disbelievers). Islam is not just about belief; it is also about practicing the teachings of Islam through actions. The practice of Islam is based on five pillars.

- (i) - Shahada (Faith): The declaration that there is no God but Allah, and Prophet Muhammad is His final Messenger.
- (ii) - Salat (Prayer): Performing five daily prayers as an act of worship and connection to Allah.
- (iii) - Zakat (Charity): Giving a portion of one's wealth to help those in need, promoting social welfare and justice.
- (iv) - Sawm (Fasting): Fasting during the month of Ramadan to develop self-discipline and empathy for the less fortunate.
- (v) - Hajj (Pilgrimage): The journey to the holy city of Makkah, required once in a lifetime for those who are able to do so.

These pillars guide Muslims in their religious obligations and are the foundation of Islamic practice.

5. Core Beliefs of Islam: The fundamental beliefs of Islam can be outlined in six key tenets:

- (i) - Belief in the oneness of God (Tawhid): Islam teaches that there is only one God, Allah, who is unique, eternal, and self-sufficient. Allah is the creator and sustainer of all life in the universe.

"He is Allah, [who is] One
The Eternal Refuge."

(Quran 112:1-2)

- (ii) - Belief in Angels (Malaiika): Angels are created by Allah, are invisible to humans, and

performs various functions in the cosmos. They are pure without free will, and carry out Allah's Commands.

(iii)- Beliefs in the prophets (Nabuwwah): Muslims believed in a chain of prophets who were sent to guide humanity. The last and final prophet is Muhammad (PBUH) who is considered the seal of the prophets.

"Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the messenger of Allah and the seal of the prophets".

(Quran 33:40)

(iv)- Belief in the revealed scriptures (kutub): Muslim believe that Allah revealed divine scriptures to His Prophets. These include the Torah (to Moses), the Psalms (to David), the Gospel (to Jesus) and Quran (to Muhammad). The Quran is considered the final and unaltered word of Allah.

"This is the book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those conscious to Allah".

(Quran 2:2)

(v)- Belief in the day of Judgement (yom-al-Qiyamah). Islam teaches that all human

beings will be resurrected on the day of judgement. Each individual will be judged based on their deeds, and their eternal fate will be decided: either eternal bliss in paradise (Jannah) or eternal punishment in hell (Jahannam).

(vi) - Belief in Predestination (Qadar) - This refers to the belief that everything in life, whether good or bad is predestined by Allah. However human still possess free will to make choices, and they are accountable for their actions.

"Indeed all things we
Created with predestination"
(Quran 54:49)

6. Conclusion: Islam is comprehensive way of life that guides its followers in their faith and actions, relationships and societal roles. It teaches submission to the will of Allah, promotes peace, justice, charity and morality. The Quran, the final scripture, offers guidance for all aspects of life, and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad serve as an exemplary model for Muslims to follow. Through the practice of five pillars and understanding the core beliefs Muslims strive to achieve a balanced life in this world and the Hereafter.