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Assignment - 01

Islamic- Studies

⇒ What is Islam? Explain salient features of Islam.

Introduction:

Islam can be well-defined as submitting one's will to the will of Allah. It is a complete code of life as it guides human in every aspect of life, which includes social, political, financial and judicial system as well. It guides us to be mannerful and be respectful of each other's rights. It teaches us the concept of Tauheed and Risalat along with the firm belief on angels and books revealed by Allah Almighty. Islam is not a deen of perfectionism but it promotes (self-purification, self-purification (Tazkiyah-e-Nafs), equality and justice

إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ

“Surely, the true religion with Allah is Islam”

What is Islam?

The literal meaning of Islam is "peace". However Islam can be termed as "submission" hence, it can be

defined as "Submitting one's will to will of Allah". It is obligatory for muslims to obey Allah, this is what Islam teaches us to believe in (one's) oneness of Allah and ~~finality~~ of Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H). Islam symbolizes peace by promoting harmony and equality among human beings. Islam was revealed to mankind in order to balance the chaos and destruction they were causing in this world. It was revealed to stabilize mankind and teach them how to differentiate between right and wrong.

Salient features of Islam:

- (i) Tauheed (Oneness of Allah)
- (ii) Risalat (Finality of Prophethood)
- (iii) Complete Code of Life
- (iv) Social Justice.
- (v) Promoting equality and harmony.
- (vi) Family relations.
- (vii) Protection of human rights
- (viii) Self-Purification (Tazkiya-e-Nafs)
- (ix) Dignity to Mankind
- (x) Islam promotes humanity
- (xi) Promises success in hereafter
- (xii) Supports feminism

(i) Touheed

To believe in oneness of Allah is termed as Touheed.

It is the first pillar of Islam as it is obligatory for every muslim to have firm belief ~~one~~ oneness of Allah.

Touheed is the core belief of Islam and it is the first part of Kalma. While writing his book, Sirat-un-Nabi Allama shibli Nomani quoted:

“Touheed is the 1st chapter of Islamic syllabus”

In Surah-Tkhlis, Allah said;

قل هو الله هو الله الصمد لم يلد ولم يولد ولم يكن له كفوا احد

Say, "He is God, the One", the Absolute. He begetteth not, nor He is begotten. And there is none like unto Him.

(ii) Risalat

To believe in “finality ^{of} ~~and~~ Prophethood” is called risalat.

It is the belief of every muslim that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is the last prophet of Allah. He was sent by Allah as the source of enlightenment for entire mankind. This is the 2nd part of Kalma which signifies the acceptance of Muhammad (PBUH) as final prophet.

واشهد ان محمدا عبده ورسوله

“I bear witness that Muhammad (PBUH) is his servant and Messenger”

Allah says in Quran that;

“Muhammad (PBUH) is not the father of any man among you, but he is messenger of Allah and seal of prophets.” (Surah Al-Ahzab verse: 40)

This verse establishes that Muhammad (PBUH) is the last prophet sent to whole mankind not just one nation unlike other prophets -

(iii) Complete Code of Life

Islam is the complete code of life providing guidance in every aspect be it individual life or collective life.

Islam has paved a way in guiding muslims on how to deal with the chaos of contemporary era. Islam has taught us how to be morally strong and deal with different systems such as political system, financial system and judicial system. Its completeness is affirmed in Quran;

Surah Al-maida (5:3)

“Today, I have completed my ^{favour} ~~deen~~ for you and have chosen for you Islam as your religion”

This Ayah represents that Islam is completed and was chosen by Allah to guide mankind in every aspect of their life as it has been a source of enlightenment for muslims since birth.

(iv) Social Justice

Islam promotes the concept of social justice by highlighting the concept of equality among muslims. It is one of most defining feature of Islam. It promotes equality by distributing responsibilities fairly among everyone and to avoid the exploitation of these responsibilities.

اعدلوه اقرب التقوى

“Be Just, it is nearest to piety”

Surah Al-Maida (5:8)

This verse establishes that the nearest good deed to piety is being just, as it avoids one from being discriminated. Islam has emphasized that good and successful nations are created through social justice.

(v) Promoting Equality and harmony

Islam has maintain the social order by promoting the concept of equality, brotherhood and harmony. This feature has eliminated every form of discrimination, be it caste, color, creed or language. Equality has promoted a strong social system and establishing good relations with each other.

While delivering the last ^{Sermon} ~~Khutbah~~, Khutba Hijatul Vida, Prophet (PBUH) said;

“No Arab is superior to a non-Arab nor a non-Arab is superior to any Arab, White has no superiority over black nor a black

has superiority over white except by piety."

The last sermon establishes equality and brotherhood by eliminating the discrimination and promotes harmony by emphasizing honesty and ethics among muslims.

(vi) Strong family system

Islam has emphasized the importance of strong family system among entire mankind. It has enabled mankind to establish good relation among family where marriage is encouraged and parental rights and duties are established. Mutual respect and compassion is the foundation of strong family system.

Islam has emphasized the rights of parents and children along with the rights of spouses. This led to the belief in strong family system.

Prophet (PBUH) said;

"The best among you is the one who is best to his family"

(vii) Protection of human rights

Islam ensures the importance of life, morals, faiths and beliefs. It has (made) emphasized the rights of women, minorities, orphan, elderly, parents obligatory for mankind. One who follows and obey the rights of Allah must follow the 'rights of humans'.

Allah says in Quran;

“Do not kill a soul which Allah has made sacred”

This verse establishes the importance of one's life.

Islam has made it essential for us to take care of human rights in order to prevent destruction and maintain harmony in the world.

(viii) Self-Purification

Self-Purification in Arabic is known as “Tazkiyat-al-Nafs” which is the fundamental feature of Islam as it covers broader aspects of faith and belief. It is the means of encompassing both Internal and external purification. External purification involves physical and ritual cleanliness which is mandatory for worship.

Whereas, internal purification involves cleansing one's heart and soul from evil deeds such as dishonesty, envy, hypocrisy and jealousy.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) own's prayer provide a model to seeking self purification; He prayed to Allah,

(Sahih Muslim)

“O Allah, grant my soul piety and purify it.”

Thus, self-purification plays an important role in the spiritual journey and guides us how to be true and honest to oneself and others.

(ix) Dignity to mankind

Allah states in Quran;

وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ ۝

Certainly, we have honoured children of Adam
This Ayah establishes the concept that humans are superior of all creations and He has honoured both men and women which proves that Islam emphasizes the dignity to mankind. It does not specify a man or a woman rather it brings dignity to entire mankind. Besides honouring mankind, (he) Islam has also protected their honour. Allah says in Quran;

وَتَعَزَّزْ مِنْ تَشَاءُ وَتَذَلَّ مِنْ تَشَاءُ ۝

And you honor whom you will and you humble whom you will

(Quran 3:26)

(x) Islam promotes humanity

Islam promotes humanity based on the system of justice, equality, brotherhood and safeguarding human rights.

Islam was sent as a complete deen to protect the mankind from their false beliefs and to promote humanity. In Islam, humanity covers all the aspects which includes showing sympathy and care for each other, protection of Animal rights, environmental protection, social work, visiting an ill person or protection of human rights, and to be characterful.

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Prophet (P.B.U.H) said;

“The best among you is the one who is best in character”

There are enormous examples in Islamic history which shows how Islam promotes humanity by protecting animal rights as once Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) reprimanded a person just because his camel was thirsty. Moreover, Islam expanded the concept of environmental protection in terms of humanity.

Prophet (PBUH) said;

“Planting a green tree is the best charity”

(xi) Promises success in hereafter

Islam promises success in hereafter but this promise is conditionally based on faith and righteous deeds. Islam was sent as a complete deen to entire mankind with his firm faiths of Touheed, finality of prophethood, angels and the books revealed by Allah. Islam is the guiding medium for this temporary world and a source of success and reward in the next world. Muslims are promised paradise if they remain righteous and true to their creator.

Allah says in Quran;

قد افلح المؤمنون .

“The believers have certainly succeeded”

(Quran 23:1)

(xii) Islam supports feminism

Islam grants women honour, social justice, political rights, inheritance, education and dignity at the time when world denied this. Islam supports feminism by safeguarding the women rights and promoting gender equality by stating no man has superiority over anyone except piety. This is a fundamental feature of Islam because the arrival of Islam has ended gender discrimination and unlawful acts committed against women.

Allah says in Quran,

“And women have rights similar to those upon them, according to fairness.”

(Quran 2: 223)

Conclusion

Islam stands out as a complete deen guiding entire mankind and leading them to a straight path by obeying the commands of Allah, having firm faith and beliefs, self-purification and worships. Islam has paved a way in establishing strong system, protecting human rights and promoting equality and harmony. Thus, it has balanced the chaos and enlightened the entire mankind.