

NAME RIMSHA MALIK
BATCH NO 83

QUESTION NO: 01

What is Islam? Elaborate the salient features of Islam?

ROOT MEANING:

The word Islam is an Arabic term derived from the triliteral root (S-L-M). This root carries several interconnected meanings: Peace (Salām), Safety, Security, wholeness, and Submission or Surrender. It implies the idea of attaining peace and safety through complete and willing submission to the will of Allah.

DEFINITION FROM SHARIAH:

From the perspective of Islamic law (shariah), Islam is defined as the voluntary submission and obedience to the will of Allah in belief, speech, and action. This submission is not coerced but chosen willingly by the believer, as Allah declares in the Qur'an:

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرِّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ
بِاطْغَاوَاتِ دُيُوتِهِمْ تَبَيَّنَ الْحَقُّ فَقَدْ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرَّةِ
الْوُثْقَى لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا وَاللَّهِ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ (٢٥٦)

Translation:

There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion. The right course

has become clear from the ~~writing~~. So whoever disbelieves in Taqut and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it. And Allah is hearing and knowing."

The principle of Islam as a conscious and respectful choice is also emphasized in Surah Al-kafirun as:

کہ دینکے دیکے رہیں ۵

Translation:

"For you is your religion, and for me is my religion."

This highlights that faith is a personal matter between the Servant and the Creator. Islam rejects forced beliefs and affirms that Submission to Allah must be deliberate, heartfelt, and untainted by coercion.

The famous Hadith Jibreel further clarifies the Shariah definition of Islam. When Angel Jibreel (Gabriel) asked the Prophet (SAW), "What is Islam?" He replied:

"Islam is to testify that there is none worthy of worship except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, to establish the prayers, to pay the Zakat, to fast [the month of] Ramadan, and to make Pilgrimage to the House if you have the means to do so."

Islam is described through its five Pillars, which are the practical expressions of Submission

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to Allah. As the Prophet (SAW) also said:

"The difference between a Muslim and a disbeliever is the abandonment of Prayer" (Sunan al-Tirmidhi, Sahih Muslim).

This Hadith shows that Salah is not just a ritual but a defining act that separates genuine submission from rejection. It is the daily affirmation of one's servitude to Allah.

DEFINITIONS BY SCHOLARS:

According to Dr. Hameedullah:

"Islam is the monotheist
deen revealed upon Prophet (PBUH)."

Imam Ghazali stresses that Islam is a balance between the rights of Allah (worship, obedience) and the rights of people (justice, honesty, compassion). He emphasized the interconnectedness of knowledge and action in Islam. As he said:

"Knowledge without action is vanity,
and action without knowledge is insanity."

Similarly, according to Sadruddin Islahi (in his book *Islam at a glance*), Islam is a perfected and universal code of life that harmonizes the rights of Allah with the rights of humans. It is both inherent, as all creation naturally obeys its Creator, and voluntary, as humans consciously choose to submit. Rooted in human nature, it offers a balanced way that nurtures both body and soul, intellect and emotion. Neither monastic nor materialistic, Islam integrates worship,

law, and social justice into a single divine system. It highlights that Islam is the name of a complete set of beliefs and practices.

اتصال الأعمال بالنيات

Translation:

"Actions are dependent upon their intentions."

Universality and Timelessness of Islam:

- Islam is not a religion for one tribe, nation, or era - it is the universal message revealed for all humanity. It calls every human being to submit to Allah regardless of background. As Allah said in the Quran:

وما ارسلناك الا كفاة للناس بشير وناذير
والكن انكسر الناس لا يعاملون (34:28)

Translation:

"We have sent you 'O Prophet' only as a deliverer/bringer of good news and a warner to all of humanity, but most people do not know."

- Islam is a complete code of life, covering personal spirituality, moral conduct, family structure, governance, economics, and social justice.
- The teachings of Islam are timeless, applicable in every age until the Day of Judgment. Its principles are not outdated because they are rooted in divine wisdom.

هو الذي ارسل رسول بالهدى لدين الحق ليظهر على
الدين كله دلو سره انكسر كون (62:9)

Translation:

"He is the one with true guidance making it prevail over dismay of the polytheists. Islam rejects racial superiority. All that is noble and pious is the (49:13) عليم خبير

Translation: "Surely the sight of Allah is true. Allah is true."

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Translation:

"He is the One who has sent his Messenger with true guidance and the religion of truth, making it prevail over all others, even to the dismay of the polytheists."

- Islam rejects racial, linguistic, or cultural superiority. All humans are equal before Allah, and piety is the only measure of honor.

ان اکبر مکه عند الله ان الله اعلم خبير (49:13)

Translation: "Surely the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous among you. Allah is truly All-knowing, All-aware."

The Quranic message addresses 'Alm-Nas' (all people), inviting them to the truth without discrimination. Islam is the final global message of Allah.

SALIENT FEATURES OF ISLAM

1. TAWHEED:

Tawheed is the core belief of Islam, affirming that Allah alone is the Creator, owner, and Ruler of the Universe. He has no partners, no equals, and no intermediaries in His divinity. It is the first part of the Kalima Tayyab. Tawheed liberates humans from worshipping anyone or anything other than Allah, freeing them from superstition, idolatry, and false deities. All acts of worship - prayers, supplication, sacrifice must be directed to Him alone.

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قل هو الله احد. الله الصمد. لم يلد ولم يولد.
لم يكن له كفوا احد. (112:2)

Translation:

"Say, He is Allah, [who is] one. Allah, the Eternal Refuge. He neither begets nor is born, nor is there to Him any equivalent."

The Prophet (PBUH) said:

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

Allama Shibli Nomani in his work 'Seerat-um-Nab' emphasizes the core concept of Tawheed (the oneness) of Allah as the foundation of Islam and the Prophet Muhammad's teachings. He highlights that the Prophet's (PBUH) entire mission revolved around establishing and disseminating the concept of Tawheed.

2. **PROPHETHOOD (RISALAT):**

The doctrine of Prophethood, a cornerstone of Islamic belief, encapsulates the divine appointment of chosen individuals to convey Allah's guidance to humanity. These messengers and prophets serve as moral exemplars, guiding humanity towards righteousness and ethical conduct. From Adam to the final Prophet (PBUH) the messengers have played a pivotal role in delivering divine revelations, offering spiritual enlightenment, and preserving the monotheistic belief in the oneness of God.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was

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Sent as a universal
his teachings, which
are complete and
come after him -
As stated in Surah
Al-Ahzab: 56
وَلَا تَجِدُ أُمَّةَ
رَبِّكَ إِلَّا سَبَّحَتْهُ
مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُوْلُهُ

Translation:

"Muhammad
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to follow."

وَلَا تَجِدُ أُمَّةَ
رَبِّكَ إِلَّا سَبَّحَتْهُ
مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُوْلُهُ

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Sent as a universal messenger for all mankind. His teachings, recorded in the Quran and Hadith, are complete and timeless. No prophet will come after him - his message is final and perfect. As stated in Surah Al-Ahzab:

مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِنْ رِجَالِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَخَاتَمُ النَّبِيِّينَ
رُكَّانِ اللَّهِ بَلْ شَيْءٌ عَالِيَانِ (33:40)

Translation:

"Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but is the Messenger of Allah and the Seal of the prophets. And Allah has perfect knowledge of all things."

Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) life and actions serve as a perfect example for Muslims to follow.

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ
رَأْسِيمَ الْآخِرَةِ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا (33:21)

Translation: "Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah you have an excellent example for whoever has hope in Allah and the Last Day, and remember Allah often."

This highlights the importance of constantly remembering God as a key aspect of the Prophet's example and a characteristics of a true believer."

3. ISLAM AS A COMPLETE CODE OF LIFE:

Islam is not limited to rituals or spirituality; it covers personal behavior, social relations, law, economics, politics, and moral values. It

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humanity in every situation and ensures justice and harmony. Its teachings are relevant in all eras and societies, providing a balance between spiritual needs and worldly affairs.

As stated in the Quran:

وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تَبْيِينًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً
وَبُشْرَىٰ لِّلْمُسْلِمِينَ

Translation:

"And We have sent down to you the Book as clarification for all things and as guidance and mercy and good tidings for the Muslims". (Surah-An-Nahl 16:89).

4. HUMANITY, JUSTICE, AND COMPASSION:

Islam promotes respect for human life, dignity, and rights. It forbids oppression, racism, and exploitation. Justice is a core value—Muslims are commanded to be fair even towards those they dislike.

As mentioned in Surah An-Nisa:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا وَإِذَا
حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ (4:58)

Translation:

"Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice."

Allah said in the Quran:

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O believers! Stand firm for justice as witnesses for Allah even if it is against

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yourselves, your parents, or close relatives. Be they rich or poor, Allah is best to ensure their interests. So do not let your desires cause you to deviate from justice. If you distort the testimony or refuse to give it, then know that Allah is certainly All-Aware of what you do." (Surah An-Nisah 4:135).

5. PROMOTION OF HUMANITY AND BROTHERHOOD:

Islam elevates humanity by abolishing all artificial barriers. All men and women are equal before Allah. Color, language, wealth, and status do not determine superiority — only 'taqwa' (Piety and righteousness) does. This creates a society based on dignity, compassion, and mutual respect rather than discrimination.

As mentioned in Surah Hujurat:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا
وَأَسْبَاطًا لِّتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقْوَمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ (49:13)

Translation:

"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. Surely the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous among you. Allah is truly All-knowing, All-Aware."

Allah said in the Quran:

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وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ فِي السِّبْطِ وَالْبَحْرِ رِزْقًا
مِّنَ الْطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِّمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا
تَفْضِيلًا (١٧-٢٠)

Translation:

"Indeed, We have dignified the children of Adam, carried them on land and sea, granted them good and lawful provisions, and privileged them far above many of Our creatures."

6. Emphasis on Knowledge and Reflection:

Knowledge is sacred in Islam. The very first revelation emphasized literacy and meaning.

"Read in the name of your Lord who created -- who taught by the Pen - Taught man that which he knew not." (Surah Al-Alaq, 96:1-5)

Islam considers ignorance a form of darkness. Seeking knowledge, whether religious or scientific, is an obligation. The Islamic Golden Age was built upon this principle, where Muslims excelled in science, medicine, philosophy, and art.

7. Social work and Welfare:

Helping the needy, poor, and oppressed is a religious duty. Islam institutionalized welfare through Zakat, Sadaqah, Icharat and Waqf. As mentioned in the Quran:

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَمَا تُقَدِّمُوا لَكُمْ
مِّنْ خَيْرٍ يَّجِدْهُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ يَمْشِكُ بِهِ السُّيُوفُ
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Translation:

"Establish prayer, and pay alms-tax. whatever good you sent forth for yourselves, you will certainly find its reward with Allah. Surely Allah is All-Seeing of what you do."

Social work is seen as an act of worship. A true Muslim Society is one where no one sleeps hungry.

As Surah Al-Insan 76:8-9, highlights:

رِطْعِمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا
إِنَّمَا نُطْعِمُكُمْ لِوَجْهِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَثَنًا

Translation:

"And give food - despite their desire for it - to the poor, the orphan, and the captive, saying, 'We feed you only for the sake of Allah, seeking neither reward nor thanks from you'."

Islam promotes social work and welfare to maintain peace, equality and harmony in the society.

Environmental Protection:

Islam emphasizes care for nature as part of faith. As the Quran states:

Translation:

"And cause not corruption upon the earth after its reformation." (Surah Al-Araf 7:56)
Planting trees, caring for animals, and

maintaining ecological balance are acts of reward.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

"If a Muslim plants a tree or sows seeds, and then a bird, or a person, or an animal eats from it, it is regarded as a charity for him." (Sahih Bukhari)

So, Islam emphasizes care for the natural environment and prohibits the destruction and wastage. As highlighted:

Translation:

"And He is the one who produced for you gardens of trellises and without trellises, date palms, crops of different shape and taste --- Eat of their fruit when they ripen, but Pay their due on the day of harvest, and do not waste. Indeed, He does not like the wasteful." (Surah Al' An'am 6:141).

In essence, along with Tawheed, Prophethood, justice, universality, Peace, and Social balance, Islam also ensures protection of human rights, Promotion of social welfare and environmental Protection. This makes Islam not only a religion of rituals but a comprehensive system for humanity's survival, dignity, and sustainability.