

What is Islam? Elaborate the salient features of Islam.

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Islam is a complete code of life revealed by Allah for the guidance of humankind. The word "Islam" is derived from the Arabic root "SLM", which means peace, submission, obedience and surrender.

In its religious sense, Islam signifies total submission to the will of Allah, leading to the inner peace and harmony in both individual and collective life. A person who submits himself to Allah is called "Muslim". Islam emphasizes Tawheed (Oneness of Allah) and rejects all other form of polythesim, superstitions and man-made believes.

The Quran states:

"Indeed, the religion in the sight of Allah is Islam."

(Surah Aal-e-Imran: 19)

Islam is a universal religion meant for all humanity, races, nationality, language and culture. It provides complete guidance of life and recognizes all previous prophets and divine books but consider Islam the final and complete message.

Salient features of Islam :-

1- Tawheed:-

Tawheed is the foundation and core principle of Islam. It means belief in the absolute oneness, sovereignty and supermacy of Allah. Islam rejects all forms of shirk (association of partners with Allah), whether in worship, authority or attributes.

There are three types of Tawheed or we can say, Tawheed is divided into three parts:

- (i) Tawheed - ur - Rububiyah (Oneness of Allah)
- (ii) Tawheed - uk - Uluhiyyah (Oneness of worship)
- (iii) Tawheed - ul - Asma wa sifat (Oneness of attribute)

It is mentioned in Serah - tu - Nabi by Shibli Nomani that,

“Islam is like a fort and tawheed is the door to that fort.”

He also wrote that,

“Tawheed is the first chapter of Islamic syllabus.”

2- Risalah or Prophethood:-

Islam believes in the institution of prophethood as a mean of divine guidance. Allah sent prophets to every nation to

guide people toward righteousness.
The Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is the last and final Prophet, known as Khatam-un-Nabiyin. His teachings are universal and eternal.

“Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the messenger of Allah and the last of the prophets.”

(Surah - AL-Ahzab : 40)

3- Belief in the Hereafter:-

Islam emphasizes belief in life after death, accountability, reward and punishments.

Every individual will be judged based on faith and deeds. All the people with more good deeds will go to heaven (Jannah) and those who have more sins will go to hell (Jahannam).

Belief in Akhirah instills moral responsibility, self-discipline and justice in society. It also get us close to Allah and avoid many wrong doings.

“Then indeed, after you are to die, then indeed, on the day of Resurrection you will be raised.”

(Surah Al-Mu'minun : 15-16)

4- A Complete code of life:-

Islam regulates all aspects of life, be it, the social, economic, political, legal and moral. It guides us in every aspect of life from our birth to adulthood till death. Islam teaches us about characterbuilding. It shows us the right way to live a purposeful life. Islam is the only religion that give rights to all human as well as animals. All women and men have equal rights to live their life accordingly. Not only that, it provides us guidance through Holy Quran and our last and final Prophet, Hazrat Muhammad's (PBUH) life.

Allah says in Quran,

"This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed my favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion."

(Surah Al-Maidah)

5- Balance between Spiritual and Material life:

Islam presents a balanced and moderate approach to life by harmonizing spiritual elevation with material progress, a principle known as "Wasatiyyah". It does

not encourage extreme materialism that leads to moral decay, nor does it support complete withdrawal from worldly affairs. Instead, Islam allows us to enjoy all worldly resources with fear of Allah and preparation for Hereafter. A Muslim is required to fulfill spiritual obligation such as prayer and charity while actively participating in social, economic and professional life. The Quran beautifully highlights this balance by stating:

"And seek the Hereafter through Allah has given you, but do not forget your share of the world"

(Surah Al-Qasas)

6- Islam promotes equality of humanity:-

Islam gives equal rights to all human beings. All humans are equal before Allah. No one is superior from others among us. Honor depends on righteousness (Taqwa) not race or status.

Islam teaches us to be charaterful.

Human life is sacred in Islam, and every individual is entitled to respect, protection, and basic rights. Islam condemns oppresion, exploitation and humiliation of any person and emphasizes justice and kindness in human dealings. Not only human dealings but

also for animals. Islam teaches us to be kind to animals and all things around us. Islam declares about humanity as:

"Indeed, we have honored the children of Adam."
(Surah Al-Isra)

and,

"Indeed, the most honorable of you in the sight of Allah, is the most righteous of you."
(Surah Al-Hujurat)

7- Economic system of Islam:-

Islam presents a just and balanced economic system aimed at eliminating unfairness and ensuring social welfare. It strictly prohibits interest (Riba), as it leads to injustice, concentration of wealth, and economic inequality, while encouraging lawful trade and the productive economic activity. Islam makes Zakat obligatory to ensure fair distribution of wealth and to support the poor, needy and marginalized sections of society. All means of earning must be Halal, promoting honesty, transparency and ethical conduct in economic dealings. In Quran, it is stated that,

"O you who believed, fear Allah and give up what remains of interest, if you are believers. And if you do not, then be informed of a war from Allah and his messenger."

(Surah Al-Baqarah)

8- Political and administrative principles:

Islam lays down clear political and administrative principles to ensure justice, good governance and public welfare. The Islamic system of governance is based on Shura (consultation), which encourage collective decision making and prevents autocracy. Rulers are considered trustees responsible before Allah and the people for their actions.

In Quran, it is explained as,

"Indeed, Allah commands you to return the trusts to whom they are due and judge between all people with justice."

(Surah An-Nisa)

9- Rights and status of women:

Islam grants women an honorable status and recognizes them as independent individuals with full social, legal and economic rights. Long before modern concepts of women's

rights, Islam ensured women the right to education, inheritance, consent in marriage and economic independency. Women are free to own property, conduct business and participate actively in social life while enjoying protection and respect.

Islam ~~honour~~ honors women in all roles — as a daughter, wife, mother or sister. Islam places a great emphasis on kindness, respect and justice towards them. The Quran and Sunnah collectively safeguard women's dignity and security, making their rights an integral part of Islamic social system.

In Quran, it is stated that,

“O mankind, fear your Lord,
who created you from
a single soul and created
from it its mate.”

(Surah An-Nisa)

Conclusion:-

Islam is a divine, universal and complete religion. It is not only for Muslims but for all the human beings. It gives complete guidance about all aspects of life like justice, equality, morality, social welfare and knowledge. Islam addresses spiritual salvation and practical social issues. It provides us timeless solutions to all modern problems. In short, Islam is not just a religion of rituals, it is a comprehensive code of life.