

①2- Tauheed is the core factor that makes Islam a monolithic religion. It is one of the main pillars of Islam. Tauheed signifies perfection of Allah. In Islam, it means believe in the Oneness of Allah. There are two parts of Tauheed: First, it states that there is only one God. Second, it considers Muhammad (SAW) as the messenger of Allah. Tauheed has significant values in individual and collective life. On individual level, it incites the spirits of humbleness, morality, faith and submission. On collective level, it creates, tolerance, social welfare, social development and accountability. Disbelief in Tauheed constitutes to Shirk i.e., associating others with Allah.

Tauheed = Belief in Allah and his Prophet (SAW)

Oneness of Allah:

Tauheed stresses that there is only one God. Everything in the world and heavens are created by him. He has the power to control everything. According to Quran, there is no match to Allah. Surah Ahad states,

"Say, He is Allah the One,..... and there is none like Him."

Being the only God, Allah is perfect. He is the disposer of all the affairs. Angels comply with His commands. This is why He has no need of sleep or rest. Nor He has any descendents. According to Biology, reproduction is the technique of survival of species. Hence, Allah does not need offsprings. He is Eternal and Absolute. In Ayat-ul-Kursi, it is clearly stated that neither He sleeps or get tired. Hence, Tauheed stresses Oneness of Allah in the truest of its essence.

Shirk: associating someone with Allah:

If a person associates a living or non-living thing with Allah, he/she undermines Tauheed and commit Shirk. Shirk is a grave sin and is not forgivable if a person die as a Mushrik. Committing shirk clearly violates all the principles and attributes associated with Allah. For example, Christians believe that Jesus (Isa A.S) is the son of God. This clearly contradicts with the perfection of God. It indicates that He needs offsprings and is unable to run the affairs of heavens and the earth. Hence, Shirk has been strictly condemned.

Prophet (SAW) as the Prophet of Allah and the Seal of Prophets:

Muhammad (SAW) is the last Abrahamic

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Prophet sent by Allah with revealed guidance. Believing in Prophet (SAW) is an integral part of Tauheed because he is the messenger guided by Allah. In order to understand and follow Islam, the teachings of Prophet (SAW) must be adhered. According to Huzrat-Ayesha (R.A), Muhammad (SAW) was a walking Quran. In addition, it stresses that there will be no Prophet after Muhammad (SAW), and he is the seal of Prophets.

Importance of Tauheed in individual life:

Tauheed humbles down individual into submission of Allah:

Tauheed makes a Muslim realise that there is no one above Allah. It suppresses his pride, as he believes to be a sinful human being. It deters person from considering himself above people, since he would meet Allah someday who is the greatest judge. Hence, the person submits to none other than Allah, knowing Allah is the sole disposer of affairs. His faith strengthens and his morality increases.

Strengthened faith results in strong individual moral principles:

Since the person believes in absoluteness

and perfection of Allah, he also believes in the Absolute Superiority of His knowledge. The revealed guidance becomes his objective and perfect approach to core moral principles. He strictly follow these moral guidance in the presence and absence of others. Such values create a stable ~~and~~ mental world being, knowing the person is ^{on} the guided path.

Importance of Tauheed in collective life

Guided principles of God inbuilt tolerance and ~~and~~ accountability on social level.

Believe in Allah create tolerance between people. They realise that Allah is the perfect entity and they are imperfect. They tolerate cultural, political, ethnic and class differences. These are man-made social orders that ~~can~~ should be acceptable. In congregational prayers, they stand shoulder to shoulder knowing their background ~~can~~ is not judged by the Allah but their piety level. However, collective efforts are made to help accountable those actions that is not acceptable by Allah. This is because they believe the collective welfare depends on it.

Social welfare and development improving human lives.

Tauheed creates a welfare society. People follow

Allah's commandment of honesty, integrity and collective welfare. Zakat is annually paid to uplift the financial status of those in need since Allah declared it mandatory.

Intense policy planning is done to assess various strategies in creating better lives for people. This in turn results in innovated and advanced ideas of curbing social problem in light of the Quran and Sunnah.

Conclusion

Tauheed is the core pillar of Islam and important driver of faith. It stresses on Oneness of Allah and prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH). If it is violated, it is considered a major sin. Belief in Tauheed radiates positivity that improves individual and collective life.

Q. Salah is one of the main pillars of Islam enjoined over the Muslims 5 times a day. It has been stressed several times in Quran. It is a form of submission to Allah involving physical, mental and spiritual presence. Salah has many benefits in the life of believer. On social level, it promotes brotherhood, equality, tolerance and social uplift. On moral level, it creates honesty, uprightness, integrity and repentance. On spiritual level, it

strengthen faith, increase devotion ^{and} inculcate patience.

Social effects of Salah

Salah promotes brotherhood when prayed in congregation.

Salah in congregation is gathering of Muslims to pray shoulder by shoulder standing in front of Allah. It forms and knit a community as collectively the Muslims humbles down in prostration and ~~submit~~ Submit to Allah.

A sense of brotherhood emerges ~~now~~ because they have ~~at~~ the same faith and religion. This effect dominate any other difference between the Muslims and bring them close to each other. In his Last Sermon, Prophet (SAW) clearly stated that Muslims are brothers of each other.

Salah signifies equality in congregational prayers.

The West spent centuries to figure out some principles of humanity which is equality. Black people in America struggled for centuries to obtain their rights. Islam made it clear, 1400 years ago, that no person is superior from other except through piety. Congregational prayers is an effective way to bring this into effect. People of different class,

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colour, creed and ethnicity stand together to pray, signifying equality.

Tolerance and social uplift as brotherhood and equality prevails:

A strong sense of brotherhood and equality create tolerance between people. Diversity is celebrated and people set aside their worldly differences and stand on the same page. This drives them to work for betterment of societies. Rather than pulling each other's legs on worldly differences like culture or ethnicity, collective efforts are made for the progress of all.

Moral effects of Salah

Submitting in Salah drives a person to reflect on his sins:

Salah is complete submission to Allah. A person is aware that he stands in front of Allah five times a day. It inculcates a conscious consciousness in a person over what is right and what is condemned in the spirits of Islam. The person strives to follow the right path, as he is reminded of the righteousness through

Salah. Hence, he constantly asks for Allah's forgiveness. Surah Fatihah, a surah recitation in Salah, invokes Allah to "guide us on the Straight Path"

It makes a person honest and truthful in daily affairs of life:

Salah is prayed 5 times a day. A person with slight reflection would realise that he would have to face Allah 5 times a day. All the purification of physical self makes him realise that he must strive for purification of his sins too. He fears Allah and strives for good to be able to face Allah in prayers, and seek for his guidance. Hence, a person becomes honest and truthful in his daily affairs.

Spiritual effects of Salah

Salah acts as a reminder to and refreshes faith:

Salah is a mandatory prayer and has to be performed under certain circumstances. Standing and bowing to Allah daily creates a reminder. The person prostrates and praises the greatness of Allah. He realises that Allah is his Creator and the handler of his affairs. Therefore, it refreshes his faith.

times a day.

Salah instills patience in a person:

Quran has repeatedly stressed on patience for Muslim. Salah is one of the best ways to build patience. It is a conversation between man and Allah. He knows that everything happens by the will of Allah. In this temporary abode, he has to remain patient and grateful, so he prostrates to Allah and submit to Him under any circumstances. He believes in Allah and everything destined by Him to mankind.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Salah has strong positive impacts. On Social level, it develops society by promoting brotherhood, equality and tolerance. On moral level, it creates standards of truthfulness and integrity, as the person fears and repents to Allah. On Spiritual level, it strengthens faith and creates patience during difficulties.

Q7- The contemporary ongoing conflict in different parts of Middle East has presented a dark age for Muslim Ummah. Fracture of Muslims is prominently visible as they witness the horrors in Palestine and Syria. There are many reasons associated with the realised weakness of Muslims. First, deep sectarian divides exist in Ummah since Karbala event. Second, 9/11 and Arab Spring causes deep divisions and instability among Muslims. Third, Proxy wars have prevailed throughout the globe. Fourth, Muslim countries are more intrested in state interest. Last, there is no major military or economic super power among Muslim countries.

Deep Secterian divide in the form of Shia and Sunni throughout the Muslim world:

Sunni-Shia Ideological conflict:

Shia and Sunni strongly follows the main principles of Islam. They believe in Allah and maintain their stance on seal of Prophethood. Differences aised after the death of Holy Prophet (SAW). The situation has become so grave that they sometimes consider each others as Non-Muslims. This harshly affects the unity of Ummah and incite hatred for each other.

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The struggle of Saudi Arabia and Iran against each other to declare themselves as leaders of Muslims:

The ongoing conflict between KSA and Iran emboldened the Muslim Ummah division. The former is a Sunni-majority state while the latter is a Shia-majority state. Both want to become the most dominant Muslim states. Consequently, it led to sectarian conflicts in Syria, Yemen, Iraq and Libya. Both supporting the factions of their sects. The constant state of war all together weakened the Muslim Ummah.

The effects of 9/11 and Arab Spring 2011:

9/11 tarnished the image of Muslims and made an excuse for Westerners to destabilise the region.

After 9/11, the American declared War on Terror. Invasion in Afghanistan initiated followed by that of Iraq in 2003. The Muslims were stamped as terrorists and the world stood against them. This led to exponential rise in Islamophobia. Till date Iraq and Afghanistan face the after effects of Western invasion severely. Muslim adversely weakened and faced identity crises, as they were given terrorist and extremist labels.

Arab spring and proxy arena for international players:

Arab Spring and power vacuum;
Arab Spring met severe repercussions after it was over, A campaign for democracy, it toppled dictators throughout the Middle East. A power vacuum was created and the entire Middle East destabilised.

and increase
An opportunity to exert influence via proxy wars:

Many countries like United State, Iran and Russia extended their influence in Middle East. United State used democracy as an excuse and established military bases. Russia backed Assad to establish a regime that were vested on Russian interest of flexing muscles.

Iran used ideological and religious tactics to counter Israel and Saudi Arab.

Hezbollah and Hamas were actively countering Israel while Houthies were aimed to contain Saudi Arabs, Hence, Middle East has become a generational battle ground till date. This has greatly weakened and divided Muslims.

Muslim countries follow the laws of international politics than ~~their~~ aspiration of Muslim unity

The concept of National Interest in International relations:

In international relations, a state prioritises national interest over religious interest. There are no sentiments in policy making of national interest.

Rather, the state ensure its prosperity and well being. From the nuclear Muslim state of Pakistan to the strength of Iran, the bigger picture is self-interest. Iran's National Interest involves domination in Middle East, and Israel and USA are hindrances to it. Pakistan knows that military interference in Middle East has greater cost to it than benefit. Hence, humanity does not come first in International Relations.

The absence of mighty Muslim economic or military super power:

There is not a single state with enough economic or military might to counter US backed Israel among Muslim countries. They are aware of their weak conditions and any act would bring the wrath of Westeners over them similar to that of Middle East.

Conclusion.

The unfortunate genocidal activities in Palestine and the discovery of atrocities by Syrian Assad is a unfortunate reality for contemporary Muslim world. Mass condemnations and diplomatic channels were utilized with no real effect. Organisations like OIC and UN bitterly failed for the purposes they were made. The oil-laden countries of Saudi Arabia prioritised their economic progress over the humanity.

Q8.

a) Peace in Islam

Historical events during Prophet (SAW)'s lifetime Islam has been derived from the word 'Salam' which means peace. Hence, Islam is a great advocate of peace. During the life time of prophet (SAW), there were various instances that back this claim.

To start with, Treaty of Hudaibiyyah was the first gesture of peace. It was signed between Quraysh and Prophet (SAW).

The war was avoided and peace established for 10 years. The Pact of Madinah is another instance where Prophet (SAW) avoided the conflict of Aws and Khazraj and laid charter for a pluralistic society of Muslims, Jews and pagans. The general amnesty given to Quraysh

is another glaring example. Hence, Islam is based on peace and forgiveness.

Islam, terrorism and Islamophobia:

Unfortunately, in today's world, Islam has been associated with menace. After 9/11, massive propaganda labelled Muslim terrorist. Ayats were misinterpreted and Islam was depicted as violent religion. The essence of Jihad was damaged and Islamophobia rose.

Many extremist factions like Al-Qaeda and Daesh misused religion and spread terrorism ~~thru~~ in the name of Jihad to achieve their ~~per~~ vested political interest.

Jihad, terrorism and the principle of peace:

The name of Jihad has been tarnished by associating it with terrorism. Clearly, it is a sheer exploitation and wrong interpretation. If the derivations of both the terms are analysed, they ~~do~~ does not sync together. Jihad is fight in the way of Allah against oppression.

Terrorism is oppression to achieve vested political objectives. Jihad is a self defence ^{with} terrorism is an oppressive measure. Jihad is conducted to establish peace while terrorism is conducted to destroy peace.

b) Self-Purification in Islam

There are three forms of Self-Purifications: Physical, Moral and Spiritual.

Physical Purification:

Abulation before Salah

Physical purification is mandatory before performing Salah. It involves self cleaning to pray 5 times a day. Physical cleanliness is half of faith. Moreover, Prophet (SAW) said that abulation 5 times a day wipes sins.

Ghusl after certain conditions

Ghusl is a form of physical purification. It involves taking a thorough bath. There are many conditions that makes it mandatory. Sexual intercourse or seminal discharge bounds Muslim to do Ghusl. In addition, menstruation in females also requires ~~ablu~~ Ghusl.

Moral Purification

Repentance after committing sins:

Humans have been given the choice of freewill. They ~~are~~ can choose both

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right and wrong. Having Satan with them, they commit sins frequently. However, they morally get purified when they feel guilt in their heart and ask for Allah's forgiveness.

Spiritual Purification

Faith revival and renewal.

Human beings have constant many curiosities, doubts and questions. Similarly, they have new questions regarding religion. Hence, at times their spiritual conditions deteriorate. In such case, studying Islam and contemplating on primary texts of Islam provides many answers. Moreover, submission to Allah revives faith. In addition, reflection of the world also strengthens faith, which has been stressed several times by Islam.