

ISLAM

DEFINITION

Islam means, submission, surrender, obedience and peace to Allah Subhanahoo, and that way peace is achieved. The word "Islam" in its religious sense signifies complete submission to the Will of God as it is the true religion for the whole of community and it enjoys the distinction of bearing significant name "Islam" i.e. 'To enter into peace'. Peace with God implies complete submission to His Will. Thus, Islam in its very inception is the religion of peace and it provides its followers with a perfect code whereby they may work out what is noble and good in man, and to maintain peace and love between man and man. There are two basic doctrines; unity of God and belief in Muhammad (SA) as the last Prophet (SAW) and the Unity for Brotherhood (Muslim Ummah). It is complete submission to divine laws indicated in the same word "Aslama".

When the Messenger of God Ibrahim (AS) was asked to show submission to God Almighty, Ibrahim replied "Submission to the Divine who is the Owner of this Universe.

Islam has a two-fold significance; a simple profession of faith a declaration, that there is nothing that deserves to be worshipped but God, and that Muhammad (SA) is the Messenger of God, and a complete submission to the Divine Will, which is only attainable through spiritual perfection. Thus, the man who simply accepts the religion of Islam, the mere novice, is a muslim, as well as he who completely submits himself to the Divine Will and carries out in practice all the divine commandments subduing his desires to the Will of God.

Islam is the last of the greatest religions-those mighty movements which have revolutionized the world and changed the destinies of nations. But it is not only the last religion led by last Prophet (SAW) (PBUH) it is an all-inclusive system of faith which contains within itself all religions that went before it. One of its most striking characteristics is that it requires its followers to believe that all the great religions of the world that preceded it were revealed by God. It is a fundamental principle of Islam and that a muslim must believe in all the Prophet (SAW)s. And Prophet (SAW)s were, according to the teachings of the Holy Quran, raised up among previous nations.

The follower of Islam is called "Muslim" one who voluntarily declares belief in Allah alone and the Prophet (SAW)hood of Muhammad (SA) and thus enters into the faith of Islam. Then he worships only Allah, and acts in accordance with Qur'an and Sunnah.

A Jew believes only in the Prophet (SAW)s of Israel, a Christian believes in Jesus Christ and, in lesser degree, in the Prophet (SAW)s of Israel, a Buddha; a Zoroastrian in Zoroaster; a Hindu in the Holy Hindu raised up in India but a Muslim believes in all those Prophet (SAW)s sent by God and in Muhammad (SA) also as a last of the Prophet (SAW)s and no more. Islam is, therefore, a comprehensive faith, within which are included all the religions of the world; and, similarly, its sacred book, the Holy Qur'an, the Last Book is spoken.

Islam professes another characteristic that it is the last religion and is perfect, which is expressed in Qur'an.

This day I have perfected for you your religion, completed my favour on you, and chosen for you Islam as Religion.

SALIENT FEATURES OF ISLAM

Thus it is great mission of Islam to bring about peace by establishing a brotherhood of all the religions of the world, together all the religious truths contained in previous religions, to correct their errors and to sift the true from the false, to preach the eternal verities which had not before been preached on account of the special circumstances of any race or society in the early stages of its development, and last of all to meet all the moral and spiritual requirements of an ever-advancing humanity.

ARTICLES OF FAITH

These are seven in number:

Belief in: 1) God

1. Angels
2. Books of God
3. Messengers from God
4. The Hereafter
5. Pre-measurement of good and evil
6. Resurrection after death

The life after death, according to Islamic teaching, is not a new life, but only a continuance of this life, bringing its hidden realities into light. It is a life of unlimited progress; those who qualify themselves in this life for the progress will enter into Paradise, which is an other name for the said progressive life after death, and those who get their faculties stunted by their misdeeds in this life will be the denizens of Hell-a-life incapable of appreciating heavenly bliss, and of torment-in order to get themselves purged of all impurities and thus ultimately, to become fit for the life in the Heavens.

MUSLIM

A muslim does not believe in fatalism or predestination; but he believes in pre-measurement. Everything created by God is for good in the given use and under the given circumstances. Its abuse is evil.

PILLARS OF ISLAM

These are five in number:

1. Declaration of faith in the Oneness of God, and in the Divine Messengership of Muhammad (SA).
2. Prayer (Salat).
3. Fasting (Saum).
4. Alms-giving (Zakat).
5. Pilgrimage to the Holy Shrine at Mecca (Haj).

ISLAM AS A RELIGION

Religion is a state of civilization which aims to save the human society from corruption. It provides love, sympathy, kindness to one's fellows, and provides the essential lessons for purity of thoughts through spirit of selflessness and service with faith and regard in his universe.

Religion is necessary to humanity. And it has supreme force in the development of mankind to its present day status. The Islamic concept through Muhammad (SA) has changed the whole history of human race and raised it from the depth of degradation to moral heights. Through the noble sentiments of this religion Islam inspires man to learn the origin in the teaching of Holy Book of God (Qur'an) and having deep faith in God has proved to be a better and lofty emotion for humanity. If this faith is taken away in the society, the masses will suffer a state of savagery and high ideals will vanish. The religion of Islam has obliterated difference of colour, race, language, geographical boundaries and even differences of culture. It has distinguishably emphasized that "Takwa" is the only thing which takes a man to God. It speaks of unification of humanity in the form of brotherhood with the bonds of Islam, and suggests solutions to problems.

The Prayer in Islam is only as incentive including all the other Fasting, Zakat, Hajj for obtaining "Takwa". The anti-Islam movements, specially the ones in former USSR have proved all such misconceptions. According to Allama Iqbal, Islam is a system of general truth which has the effect of transforming characters when they are sincerely held and vividly apprehended. Qur'an says:

Nearest thing to God is, "DIN" and that is Islam. It is a Divine Institution which guides the rational beings, by their choosing it to salvation to here and hereafter and it covers both articles of belief and action.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ISLAM

These are:

1. Universality –it is universal in scope.
2. Rationalism – it stands for reason.
3. Comprehensiveness- it provides a complete code of life.
4. Positivism – it takes a positive, and not a negative view of life.
5. Integration – it stands for integration as opposed to division.
6. Dynamism- it stands for progress and development.
7. Equality- it stands for equality.
8. Social justice- it stands for direct communion between man and God without the intervention of anyone.

ISLAM – A CODE OF LIFE

Islam is not only concerned with more religious doings. It seeks to regulate human conduct in all fields of life. It has set certain ideals for men and the aim of Islamic socio-political order is to provide the necessary climate for the achievement of these ideals. Islam presents the following ideals to be adopted for a peaceful life as per teachings of the Holy Prophet (SAW) and God Almighty.

1. Religious ideal – to establish belief in the Unity of God throughout the world.
2. Moral ideal – to ensure that everyone becomes an embodiment of moral virtues.
3. International ideal – to establish the brotherhood of man.
4. Social ideal – to create a pattern of life and social order under which the distinctions of caste, creed, colour, race, wealth and power find no place.
5. Intellectual ideal – to promote the acquisition of knowledge.
6. Cultural ideal – to bring about a wholesome synthesis between the material and the spiritual aspects of human personality.
7. Political ideal – to establish a welfare state subject to Islamic Law.

Islam is thus a perfect religion, and there can be no scope for further improvement in it. In the working of Islamic Law, however, there is scope for the re-interpretation from time to time according to the changing circumstances and situations. Therefore, we hold that Islam is a rational and progressive code of life.