

## The Root of the word Islam

س ل م Siin, laam, miim (salama)

Since this is the root from which the word *Islam* has also been derived, its basic meanings must be comprehended properly because these derivatives will be used to explain various aspects of the word *إسلام* “Islam”. All meanings under this heading have been taken from Taj, Muheet Raghieb or Lane’s Lexicon.

1) “Sa-lim” *سَلِمَ* means he became clean (or pure or free) from all sorts of faults; all his shortcomings were made up; “*salamad dalau*” in Arabic references that: “he prepared a strong bucket”; in Surah Baqarah (Chapter 2, Verse 71) it is said concerning the cow that the Bani Israeel had been commanded to slaughter: *musallamatun la shiyatah fee ha*; *مُسَلَّمَةٌ لَا شَيْطَةَ فِيهَا* “it be free from all bodily marks (faults) and spotless”; as such “sa-lima” *سَلِمَ* would mean “to be pure and without any blemish”: i.e. **the complete development of human capabilities.**

2) The next meaning of this *root* is to be protected from dangers, accidents, or ill-fate; Ibn Faaris has said that it means more of health and wellbeing than anything else; *salima minal aafateh salamah* in Arabic phraseology would mean: “he was safe from ill effects”; *sallahullahu tasleemah* *سَلَّمَهُ اللَّهُ تَسْلِيمًا*: “Allah kept him safe from any ill effect”.

The Qur’an has mentioned one name of Allah as *السَّلَامُ* “As Salaam”: in Surah 59, Verse 23 which is generally taken to mean “free from all blemishes and faults”; but Tajul Uroos states that this is not entirely correct because *السَّلَامُ* “salaamun” is to seek protection from something *سَالِمٌ* “saalimun” is one who seeks protection; i.e. “someone who wants to be protected from evil or misfortune that is imminent; thus Allah has been named *السَّلَامُ* “As Salaam” because He protects all creation from trouble and misfortunes and harm and His system is thus running without any obstruction. Therefore, Allah’s attribute of *سَلَامٌ* “Salaam” would mean “one who provides safety from ill effects and misfortunes at all times.

3) *السَّلَامُ* “As Sullamu” means “a ladder”; i.e., “a safe and dependable means of reaching up; thus the third meaning of this root is “the means through which someone can reach new heights safely and dependably.

4) *السَّلَامُ* “As Silmu” means to live peacefully and amicably; *السَّلَامُ* “As silm” means amity, reconciliation; thus the fourth meaning of this root would be “to live peacefully and to establish peace and security in the world. *تَسَالَمَتِ الْخَيْلُ* *tasaalamatil khail*: means “horses moving together; synchronising their feet and trotting in tandem to one another; and none of the horses acting in a manner that would frighten the other resulting in stampede or chaos”.

5) *السَّلَامُ وَالسَّلَامُ* *As silmu was salsaam*: means “obedience; to bow before someone”; therefore, the fifth basic meaning of the root would be “to obey the laws of Allah in totality”; Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan writes that the root *س ل م* (siin, laam, miim), basically has the element of softness and humility.

6) *اسْتَسَلَمَ تَكَمَ الطَّرِيقَ بَقِي* *Istaslam akamat tareeq* : means “he walked in the middle of the road and kept straight i.e. unwavering”; thus *قَالُوا سَلَامًا* *qaalu salaamah*, Chapter 25 Verse 63 means “they adopt the moderate path and do not do anything that is excessive”. Thus the sixth meaning of this root would be to adopt the path of moderation and to avoid things which are not good.

7) *اسْتَلَمَ الْقَرْعَ* *Istalama zar-u* means the ears of corn grew out of the stalk; therefore the Root’s seventh meaning would be “for efforts to have a positive results”.

8) And **السَّلِيمَةُ** “*as-salimah*” means “a woman whose limbs are very soft and attractive”: thus the eighth meaning of this root is “beauty and good looks”.

It is obvious from these meanings that **الإِسْلَامُ** “*Al Islaam*” is the **life style in which all shortcomings of man are made up for and his capabilities are fully developed; that man is safe from all destructive influences and ill fortunes; and to progress man towards his destination and that the individual himself lives peacefully and is conducive to the peace of the world. He lives with complete synchronisation with others in his society and does nothing to cause others to flare up and cause imbalance or chaos in society; this is possible only when man completely obeys the laws of Allah and not only bows his head to these Laws but also his heart to them; he does all this with complete moderation and i.e. that there is no excessiveness in action either way; this Islamic way will result in efforts being fruitful and there will not be wastage; leading ultimately not only to his own balanced personality but he will be contributing to the balance and peace of the whole society.** This is the lesson towards a better personality and character i.e. *Al Ilmul Akhlaaq*.

This is the path that will result in success and if anyone adopts any other path it will not be able to produce the results and he will ultimately be the loser: Chapter 3 Verse 84. This way of life is another name for following the Qur’an; **وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَىٰ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ التَّوْحِيدَ** *wus salaamu ala manit taba’al huda* Chapter 20 Verse 27.

The Qur’an has used the word **مُسْلِمٌ** “*Muslim*” so often that it is not possible to mention them all in this exercise; therefore, some selected examples are presented:

**مُسَلَّمَةٌ لَا شِيَةَ فِيهَا** *musallamatun la shiatah feeha*: Chapter 2 Verse 71 “free from all faults and is totally without blemish”.

**إِذَا سَلَّمْتُمْ** *iza sallamtum* here means “when you have given or handed over Chapter 2 Verse 233.

In Surah Anfaal it is stated: “you had begun to quarrel among yourselves”, **وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ سَلَّمَ** *wala kinnal lahu sallam*: Chapter 8 Verse 43 “but Allah protected you from its destructive results”; In Surah Toor the Qur’an states **سَلَّمَ** Surah 52 Verse 38 it has been used to mean “to reach loftiness”. Again in Surah Anfal it is stated **وَأَن جَنَحُوا لِلسَّلَامِ** *wa inn janmahu lis salm*, Surah 8 Verse 61 means amity, reconciliation; and in Surah 2 Verse 112 it means “obedience and faithfulness”.

Surah Room has mentioned “Islam” and “eemaan” (faith) separately Surah 30 Verse 53 as follows:

53 Nor canst thou guide the blind out of their error. Thou canst make none to hear but those who believe in Our messages, so they submit.

**وَمَا آتَتْ يَهْدِي الْعُمْيَ عَنْ ضَلَالَتِهِمْ  
إِن تُسْمِعُ إِلَّا مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِآيَاتِنَا  
قَوْمٌ مُّسْلِمُونَ**

Here “*Eeman* means to believe that the Message (of security and safety) is right and “*Islam*” means to follow it faithfully; as against those who have accepted the faith by word of mouth but their hearts are devoid of the faith, they too are said to be “*Muslims*” but not “*Mu’min*” as yet, Surah 49 Verse 14; Surah Al Namal has used the word “*Muslemin*”: to mean

**أَلَا تَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ** *alla ta’lu alayya* Surah 27 Verse 31 i.e. not to break the limits or rebel against them; to become obedient.

A man with the above characteristics has been referred to as **بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ** “a man with a “*saleem*” **سَلِيمٌ** heart” Chapter 26 Verse 89; and a nation with these characteristics **أُمَّةٌ مُّسْلِمَةٌ لَّكَ** *ummatan muslimatal lak* Chapter 2 Verse 128 i.e. “a nation that follows the laws of Allah; and every individual of this nation then has a duty to say **سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ** “*salamun alaikum*” to everyone he meets, Chapter 7 Verse 46 i.e. I wish you **سَلَامٌ** “*salam*” or peace and security and all the good things mentioned above; and the other party answers in this vein too; and the whole society rings with the sounds of **سَلَامًا** “*salaman salama*” Surah 56 Verse 26 (this is the Jannah created on earth).

Concerning Hazrat Ibrahim AS it is stated that he was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was **حَنِيفًا مُسْلِمًا تَهِي** *hanifan muslima*, Surah 3 Verse 66 this is the name **مسلم** which is used for the followers of Allah's *Deen* **دين**; before the Revelation of Qur'an and subsequent to its Revelation: Chapter 22 Verse 78.

To create sects and belong to some sect is against Islam; because sectarianism is a negative concept, sin and shirk Surah 30 Verse 32; a "Muslim" and "Mushriq" are opposed to one another; as *kufir* and *Islam*; Surah 9 Verse 74.

It must be well understood that a *Muslim* can NEVER be a criminal; that is why the Qur'an states:

**أَفَتَجْعَلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ كَالْمُجْرِمِينَ** *afanaj-alul muslemina kalmujremeen* Surah 68 Verse 35 will we turn the *muslims* as the *mujrimeen* (criminals)? Thus a **مسلم** is one that follows the Laws of Allah at all times and cannot be one who becomes a criminal.

Therefore, he who follows Allah's Laws is a Muslim. Al-Islam is the code of conduct for life that Allah has designated for

man; no other code of life is acceptable to Allah. In Surah Aali Imran it is stated, **أَفَتَغَيِّرُ دِينَ اللَّهِ يَتَّبِعُونَ** *af-aghayira Deenillahi yabghoon*; do these people, want a *Deen* other than that designated by Allah, despite the fact that everything in the universe is, **وَلَهُ اسْلَامُ مَن فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ طَوْعًا وَكَرْهًا وَإِلْتِمَاسًا يَرْجِعُونَ** *walahu aslama mun fis samawati wal ardi tau-aw wa karhan wa ilaihi yarje-oon* Surah 3 Verse 82 meaning: "everything that is in the heavens and the earths (lows) of the Universe is subservient to His laws willingly or unwillingly and at every step they have to

follow His laws"; after that it is said, **وَمَنْ يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَن يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ** *wamun yabtaghi ghairal islaami deenan falan yuqbala minhu*, Surah 3 Verse 84 and if he, man, wants to experiment (with another *Deen*) then he can try, and he will find that ultimately he is the loser, anyone who adopts any other code of life except *Islam* it will not be accepted of him; this is the same code of life that was given to the all previous Ambia AS and, ultimately, was completed with the advent of the Qur'an; Allah has chosen this code of life for all humanity, Chapter 5 Verse 3. As such, under the sun, there is no other code of life other than that which Allah has termed Al Islam: it is to be found nowhere outside the Qur'an; the followers of this *Deen* are called "*Muslimeen*": and a *Muslim* is one who believes that the Qur'an is a complete code of life given by Allah and that it is also the last.