

80

Describe the importance of Deen (Doctrine of Life) in human life. Differentiate between Deen and Religion.

Answer

1) Introduction:-

In the human life, deen holds the importance of a guide. It provides man with answers to the questions regarding epistemology and cosmology, allows him to understand the purpose of life while balancing the tendencies of both; this world and the world hereafter.

It is this holistic nature of Deen that differentiates it from a mundane religion. While Deen offers guidance for both the spiritual and worldly life of the man, religion only consists of dogmas and rituals and nothing more.

2) Importance of Deen:-

The importance of Deen can be assessed from the fact that it doesn't just provide a spiritual or moral code but also advises man about his social, political and economic life.

a) Deen offers comprehensive guidance

Islam being a 'Deen' provides satisfactory answers to even the questions that the worldly knowledge fails to answer.

"We have sent down to you the Book explaining all things as a Guide, a Mercy and glad tidings to Muslims" (Al-Quran)

b) Deen differentiates between right and wrong

Guiding man about the right way

to seek Allah's pleasure is not the sole objective of Deen. It also lays an elaborate framework for Muslims guiding them about the right path (الصراط المستقيم) and warning them about the evil. Referring to the Muslims (followers of Deen-e-Islam) Allah says:

تأمرون بالعرف و تنهون عن المنكر و تؤمنون
بالله (Al-e-Imraan: 110)

You enjoin right and forbid wrong and believe in Allah

c) Deen clarifies the aim of life

This is yet another feature of Deen. Unlike other religions that do not provide any guidance about the ultimate aim of man on earth, Deen leaves no such confusions.

ولا أمر ولا يعبود الله محاصرين له الدين

And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him

in religion (Al-Bayyinah: 5)

d) Deen disseminates hope

with its ideology of life after death and concept of reward and punishment, it instills in man the hope that the worldly woes are only temporary and that he will be rewarded if he stays steadfast.

ان الله مع الصبرين (2:153)

Surely Allah is with those who are patiently steadfast.

3) Difference between Deen and Religion

There are various aspects that differentiate Deen and religion. Let's take a look at a few:-

a) Ideological Difference

The basic idea of religion is the belief in a supernatural deity while Deen is the submission to

Allah in every aspect of life

Regarding religion E.B. Taylor says:-

"Religion means the belief in spiritual beings."

The Deen, on the other hand has monotheism at its core and organization of all other life aspects around this concept.

ان الدين عند الله الاسلام (Al-e-Imran: 69)

The Deen near Allah is Al-Islam.

b) Differences in components

According to Dr. Iqbal Ahmad, Religion

is an amalgam of 3 components

Aqa'id, Ikadaat and Tehzeeb. On the

other hand, Deen encompasses 6

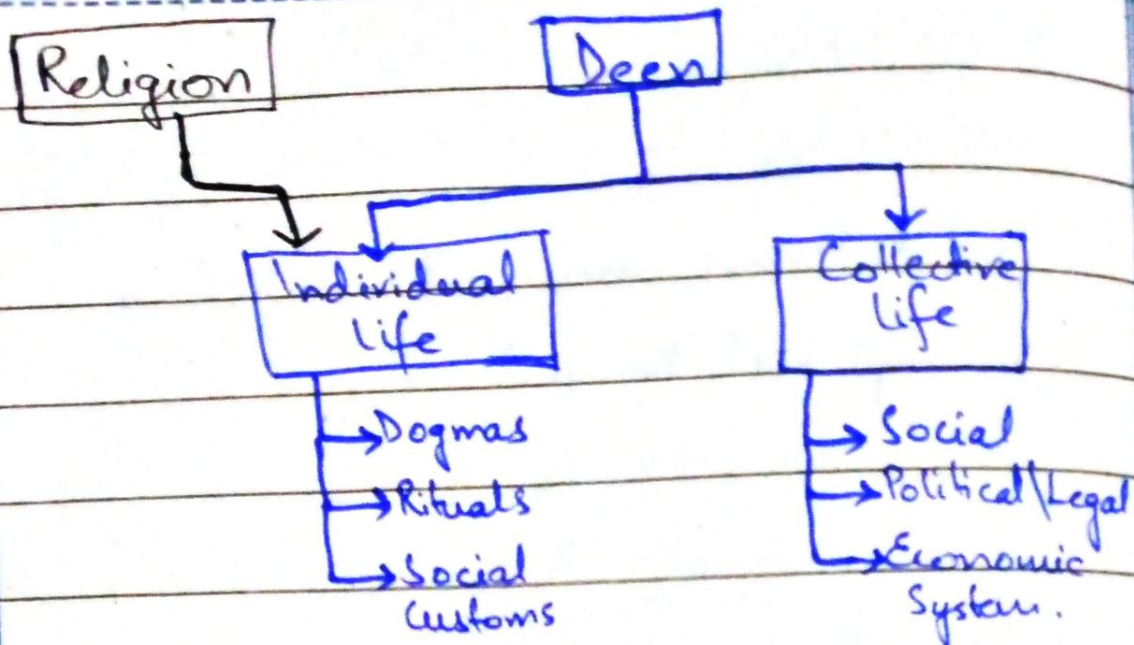
aspects including Rituals, Dogmas

and social customs (for individual

life) and social, political/legal

and economic systems (for

collective life).



c) Differences in Scope

A look at the scope of religion and deen reveals that the scope of religion is quite limited while that of Deen is all encompassing. In the Quran, we can find discussion about every topic imaginable (except those that have been deliberately left undiscussed). About Quran Allah says:

اللَّهُ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ وَالْمِيزَانَ
(Al-Shoora : 17)

d) Difference in Outlook

While the religion focuses on

narrow aspects of rituals and beliefs. Deen focuses on employing a balanced approach that includes both spiritual and worldly aspects of life. In Al-Hadeed: 27,

Allah says:

They devised monasticism as means of Allah's pleasure, we did not prescribe it for them

Deen-e-Islam, however stresses the opposite, saying:-

But seek through what Allah has given you, the house of hereafter, and [yet] do not forget your share of the world

<u>Religion</u>	<u>Deen</u>
- Consists of faith and rituals	- Consists of a comprehensive code
- Restrictive world view	- Holistic world view
- Is silent on worldly affairs	- Guides on worldly matters

4) Conclusion:-

While commenting on the vitality of Islam as a Deen and its adaptability, Prof. H.A.R. Gibbs says:-

"Within the Western world, Islam still maintains the balance between exaggerated opposites."

It is this ability to balance that differentiates between Religion and Deen. Islam is not just an outdated religion but a complete doctrine of life with abilities to adapt to changing times.