

QUESTION #1

Explain the concept of Deen in Islam and differentiate it from religion - Discuss its impact on individual character and collective social system -

1- Introduction

"And certainly We have set forth to men in this Quran similarities of every sort that they may mind"

try to add the arabic of quranic ayats..... (Al-Quran)

There is a distinct difference between Deen and religion - Deen plays a very crucial role in our individual and collective spheres of life - Deen is a comprehensive message and a divine guidance in all spheres of human lives and all human actions, including both sacred and mundane affairs - Deen is a complete code of life - It enlightens about the oneness of Allah (S.W.T), the finality of Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and those prophets who came before him and their missions and the life hereafter where we will be accountable for all our deeds and actions - On the other hand, Religion deals with the private affairs of man - It deals only with man's relation with the God - Whereas, Deen deals with man's relation with God and also with his fellow beings - It guides us about, we
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how

should interact with our family, friends, colleagues, strangers and take care of poor and orphans - Deen covers all aspects of life, individual as well as collective - It guides humans not only on sacred matters but also on secular aspects i.e. political, economic, social and judicial aspects of life -

2- Concept of Deen in Islam

"This Day I have perfected for you your Deen, completed my favour upon you, and have Islam for you as your Deen." (Al-Quran)

Deen is a complete code of life - It deals with every aspect of human life, be it individual or collective spheres of life - It deals with the relation of a man with Allah Almighty and with his fellow beings - Deen is an all embracing term that includes social, political, economic and religious system - It guides a man on both sacred and secular aspect of life - Sacred part is same as religion i.e. the man's relation with God whereas the secular part is divine guidance on social, political, economic and judicial aspect of a man and society -

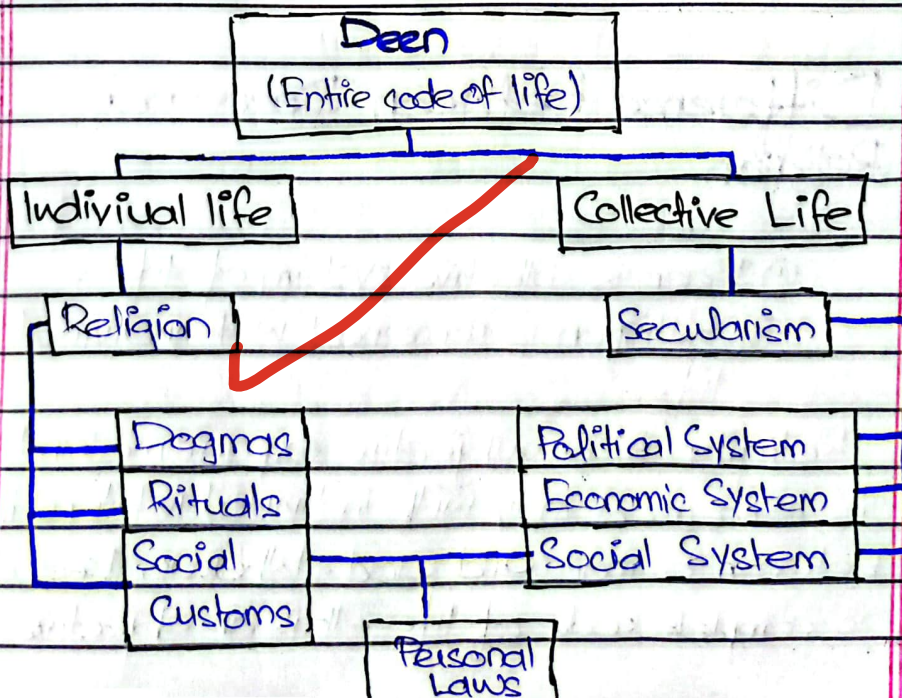
"Deen is introduced by Allah (S.W.T) in order to lead mankind to eternal

blessings - The objective of Deen is to worship Allah (S.W.T) as well as manage worldly affairs - Deen provides the guidance to establish a composite state and government on principles described by Allah -" (Ibn-e-Khaldun)-

2.1 Need for Deen

- 1- Deen provides answers to human beings on those questions which cannot be answered by science and philosophy such as the existence of God, purpose of man on Earth and what will happen to life after death.
- 2- Deen tells a man about purpose of his life and his relation with Allah Almighty.
- 3- Deen provides guidelines regarding political, social, economic, judicial and individual aspects of human life.

Deen covers entire human life as shown,



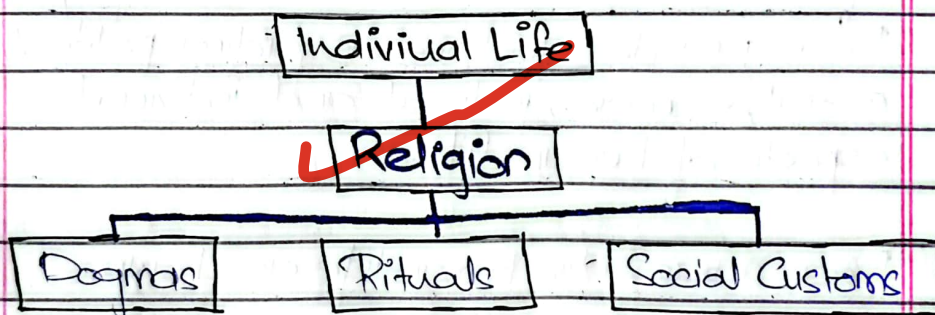
3- What is Religion?

The term religion is used in a narrow sense. It is derived from Italian word 'religare' which means "bind to".

The scope of religion is limited to set of dogmas, rituals for worship and few social customs to celebrate life events. According to Emile Durkheim, religion is defined as,

"unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things."

Religion deals with individual life only - It deals only with man's relation with God.



4- Difference between Deen and Religion-

(i) Deen is collective system of life; Religion is concerned with individual life.

Religion is a subjective experience and is concerned only with individual relationship between a man and God. Whereas, Deen is complete code of life - It is an objective

reality and a system of collective life-

(ii) Religion is limited ; Deen is Universal

Religion may be practised differently by different people due to variations in their cultures and sectarians. The teaching of religion are not universal. On contrary, Deen is same for all of its followers irrespective of their Caste, creed, race etc.

add and highlight references/examples against these arguments.....

(iii) Religion induces fear ; Deen make man courageous

Religion induces fear in the minds of men and seeks to frighten them to conformity. Whereas, Deen seeks to make man courageous, daring and self-reliant as fear is the form of polytheism.

(iv) Religion can evolve ; Deen is unamenable

Deen holds the same commandments for people of all ages. It does not evolve or amends with the passage of time. - As Allah (S.W.T) says,

"It is We who sent down the Quran and indeed, We will be its guardian." (Quran)

However, there are number of examples where religion has evolved with the passage of time. For example, in Hinduism, there was a practice of widow was burned after death of her husband which was encountered by British-

(v) Belief in fatalism; Challenge fate
Religion encourages belief in fatalism and dissuades man from active life and self-development. On the other hand, Deen gives power to man to challenge fate and provides energy for life of activity and self development.

5- Impact of Deen on Human Life — individual character and collective social systems

(1) Deen provides guidance to mankind
Deen provide guidance to mankind to move on the right path - As Allah (SWT) says in Quran,

"Surely this Quran guides to that who is most upright and gives good news to the believers who do good shall have a great reward." (Al-Quran)

(2) Deen leads mankind from darkness to light.

It leads people out of ignorance and darkness and enter them into the light of piety and goodness.

"Alif Lam Ra, This is a Book which we have revealed to you that you may bring forth men by their Lord's permission from utter darkness into light to the way of Mighty, the Praised One." (Al-Quran)

(3) Deen sets criteria for right and wrong
As Allah (S.W.T) says in Quran,

"The month of Ramadan is that in which the Quran was revealed, a guidance to men and clear proofs of guidance and judgement between right and wrong." (Al-Quran)

(4) Deen provides principle for establishment of justice

Deen guides in system of justice and equality.

"It is God who has sent down the book which is truth, and the balance to judge between right and wrong." (Al-Quran)

(5) Deen teachings are guard against evils

As Quran induces fear of God and accountability for actions, it guards men against evils.

"It is Quran in Arabic without any creobedness, in order that they may guard against evil." (Al-Quran)

(6) Deen makes person modest and bring

easiness- first add description of atleast 5 lines and then add references.....

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said,

"Verily, every religion has character and character of Islam is modesty." (Al-Hadith)

add a few more arguments.....

Conclusion

To conclude, there is a difference between Deen and Religion. Both differs in their meaning, scope and impacts of their meanings on human life. Religion is a narrow concept and is limited in nature. It only deals with a man's relation with God. However, Deen is a complete code of life as it covers both individual and collective aspect of human life. Deen has tremendous effects on our lives if we surrender ourselves to the divine teachings. Deen impacts our secular life as well which includes political, economic, social, judicial and religious aspects of life. Hence, following Deen and surrendering our worldly desires for divine guidance brings peace and success in this life and the hereafter.

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QUESTION #2

Define the fundamental beliefs (Aqaid) of Islam - Explain how belief in Tauheed shapes moral, spiritual and socio-political life.

1- Introduction

The fundamental beliefs of Islam are also known as articles of faith.

The articles of faith refers to a set of firm beliefs upon which Allah's pleasure and the final determination of Paradise or Hell depends. There are five articles of faith i.e. Tauheed

(Oneness of Allah (S.W.T)), Risalat (Prophethood), Akhirat (Hereafter), Angels and the Revealed Books.

These are the foundational beliefs that every Muslim must affirm in heart, declare by tongue and also act upon them. Allah (S.W.T) says in the Holy Quran

"Whoever disbelieves in Allah, His Angel, His Messengers, His Books and the Last Day has gone for astray."

(Al-Quran)

These beliefs connects Muslim directly to the unseen world. They shape values, goals and understanding of life.

2- Fundamental Beliefs of Islam

There are five fundamental beliefs of Islam. They are also known as articles of faith. These beliefs are derived from Holy Quran and can also be read from the hadiths of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). In Arabic these beliefs are referred as 'Aqidah' which is derived from Arabic root word 'أقْس' or 'Aqadah' which means to "tie, bind firmly or knot".

Every Muslim must accept them without doubt. These articles of faith are described as,

Basic Beliefs of Islam



(1) Belief in Allah (Tawhid)

The doctrine of Tawhid refers to the belief of absolute oneness of God which is the basic foundation of Islam. A person who has a belief in Tawhid ensures that only he is one who should be worshipped and does not associate any partner with him. There are number of verses in Holy Quran that explains the oneness of God.

قل هو الله احد - الله الصمد - لم يلد
ولم يولد - ولم يكن له كفوا احد -

1.1 Types of Tawhid

There are three categories of tawhid referred to as

- (a) Tawhid al-Dhat — Unity of Being
- (b) Tawhid al-Sifat — Unity of Attributes
- (c) Tawhid al-Af'al — Unity in Actions

(a) Unity of Being

It means that there is neither plurality of gods nor plurality of persons in Godhood-

"Had there been in heaven and earth any deities except Allah they would have certainly been ruined."

(Al-Quran)

(b) Unity of Attributes

It means that no other being possesses any of Divine attributes in absolute sense. Allah is one in his attributes -

(c) Unity in Actions

It means that nobody can do the work that Allah does, or can do or will do in future -

(2) Belief in Prophets

Prophethood is the divine institution through which Allah reveals his commandments on His chosen people called Prophets, who then transmits those guidance to His creature.

"He does not speak according to personal desires but only what is revealed to him." (Al-Quran).

Prophethood is not something that can be acquired by certain knowledge. It is bestowed by Allah (SWT) on his chosen people. As Allah says in the Holy Quran,

"Allah knows ~~and~~ best on whom to bestow Prophet." (Al-Quran)

Finality of Prophethood

The belief in the finality of Prophethood holds much importance to enter in the fold of Islam. For this, a person must accept it verbally and also requires inner conviction i.e. by heart. As Allah (S.W.T)

"Muhammad is not the father of anyone among you, He is Messenger of Allah and the seal of Prophet and Allah is aware of all things."

(Al-Quran)

Holy Prophet (PBUH) announced that,

انا خاتم النبيين لا نبي بعدي

(3) Belief in Angels (Malika)

Angels are divine creatures in Islam assigned specific roles by Allah (SWT).

They act as intermediary between divine and human worlds. They are created of light. Their prime role is to carrying out divine orders, from revelation's to performing natural orders. They are free from desire and disturbance of anger.

As Allah SWT says,

They do not disobey God in what He has commanded them, but do all that they are commanded.

(Al-Quran)

Few Angels and their Roles

(i) Jibraeel — Delivering revelations to Prophets.

(ii) Mikael — Manages rain and weather

(iii) Israfil — Blowing the trumpet on the day of judgement

(iv) Izrail — The angel of death

(v) Kivamum Katibeen — Documenting human actions

(vi) Munkir & Nakir — Questioning in grave.

(4) Belief in Divine Books

The Muslims believe that Allah (SWT) has revealed some books on his Messengers to clarify and complete his past messages so that people can be guided. Moreover, Muslims also believe that Quran is the last Book of Allah (SWT) which he revealed on his last Messenger Prophet (PBUH) and this book is free from any corruption.

Particulars of Revealed Book

- (i) Tawrat — Revealed on Prophet Musa (AS)
- (ii) Zabur — Revealed on Prophet Daud (AS)
- (iii) Injeel — Revealed on Prophet Isa (AS)
- (iv) Quran — Revealed on Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H)

Besides that Quran specifically mention Sahifas of Prophet Ibrahim and Musa.

(5) Belief in Life Hereafter

Belief in the day of judgement is the important pillar of faith. It is a belief that this world is temporary place and after death everyone will enter in the other world that is eternal and where every individual will be held accountable for their deeds. Those with good deeds will enter paradise, and those with bad deeds will be

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thrown into the Hellfire.

"He who does an atom weight of good shall see it and he who does an atom's weight of evil shall see it."
(Al-Quran)

3- Impact of Tawhid on Human Life and Society

(a) Spiritual and Moral Impacts of Tawhid on Individual Life

(i) Tawhid gives purpose of life

Belief in one God give man a clear purpose of life and he shapes his life according to the guidance of Allah. He realizes that there is a reason why I am sent to this world and that is the obedience of God.
"I didnot created Jinns and Human Beings except to worship me."
(Al-Quran)

(ii) Tawhid induces self-respect

The believer knows that Allah is the creator of everything that is present in the entire universe - Only Allah can fulfill his needs and wants. He becomes fearless and independent.

(iii) Tawhid induces humility and Modesty

Tawhid also bring modesty and

humility in belief and he never shows arrogance, proudness and haughty. He knows that everything which he possesses is the blessing of God and he can take back whenever he wants to.

(b) Socio-political Impact of Tawhid

(i) Promotes Justice and Equality

Tawhid promotes equality and justice by emphasizing that everyone is equal in sight of God and there is no discrimination on the basis of class, color or creed.

"Indeed, the most honoured among you is the most righteous among you in sight of Allah. - (Al-Quran)

(ii) Creates Brotherhood and Unity

Tawhid creates unity, brotherhood and cooperation among all believers.

"Certainly all Muslims are brothers."

(Al-Quran)

(iii) Establishes Just Economic System

Tawhid shapes an economic system based on fairness and justice, promotes equity and rejects practices of hoarding, fraud, interest and fraud.

4- Conclusion

To conclude, the fundamental beliefs of Islam are significant for the believer. He should believe in ~~the~~ these five fundamental beliefs by tongue and also by heart. It not only connects a believer to the unseen world but also gives them the purpose of their existence in this world. These beliefs not only impacts individual life of the believer but also the social life. Tawhid that is a belief in the oneness of God produces self respect, humility and modesty in the life of individual. On societal level, it promotes equality, justice and brotherhood among Muslim Ummah. Hence, these articles of faith are foundation for a just and modest life.

QUESTION # 3

Discuss the concept of Amr Bil Maroof wa Nahi Anil Munkar - Evaluate its role in establishing a balanced and ethical society in the modern world.

(1) Introduction

"And there should be a group among you who invite towards good, orders for acknowledged virtues, forbids from sin and these it is that are successful ones." (Al-Quran)

Amr Bil Maroof wa Nahi Anil Munkar is an important aspect of Islam. It is one of essential responsibility of the Muslim Ummah as described by the Holy Quran. It means enjoining Maroof and forbidding Munkar. Maroof means good, known, approved by Shariah whereas Munkar is the opposite of Maroof. It means bad, evil, disapproved by Shariah. Hence, Amr Bil Maroof wa Nahi Anil Munkar means to enjoin what is good and approved and forbids what is evil and disapproved. It is a correcting mechanism of society. Imagine a society where people help the underprivileged and eliminates poverty through

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system of Zakat and Sadqat, does justice in their dealings and prohibits corruption, immoral activities and dishonesty. This will have a positive impact on both individual and social life-

(2) Understanding the Concept of *Amar Bil Ma'roof wa Nahi Anil Munkar*

This concept of *Amar Bil Ma'roof wa Nahi Anil Munkar* is the basic guiding principle of Islam. It is an Arabic verse in Holy Quran which means "enjoining good and forbidding evil." This implies that Muslims are obligated to encourage the moral behaviors and discourage the immoral behavior and evil acts in the society. To further elaborate, it is the responsibility of a believer to earn through halal means and forbid those means of earning that are prohibited in Islam. Hence, *Ma'roof* means the concept of Tawhid and all goods that Islam has enjoined, whereas *Munkar* refers to polytheism and all those evil acts that Islam has forbidden or prohibited.

(3) Importance of Amr Bil Ma'roof wa Nahi Anil Munkir according to Quran and Sunnah

(a) According to Quran

Islam has greatly stressed on this concept of Amr Bil Ma'roof wa Nahi Anil Munkir. As per the verses of Holy Quran-

(i) "The believers, both men and women, are guardians of one another - They encourage good and forbid evil." (Al-Quran)

(ii) "And whatever the Messenger has given you take; and what he has forbidden you refrain from it." (Al-Quran)

(b) According to Hadith

(i) The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has said, "If you abandon this duty (of commanding the good and forbidding evil), you will earn Allah's wrath and your prayers will go unanswered." (Al-Hadith).

(ii) On another occasion, Prophet (PBUH) said, "Whoever among you sees an evil action let him change it with his

hand (by action); and if cannot, then with his tongue (by speaking about it); and if he cannot, then with his heart (by feeling it is wrong). And that is weakest of faith" (Al-Quran)

(4) Impact that can be created by implementing "Amr Bil Ma'ruf Wa Nahi Anil Munkar" in modern world

(i) Urging individuals to stand against injustice and tyranny

As it calls for people to enjoin good and forbid evil - Hence, people should take a firm stand against injustice, oppression or tyranny in any part of society. They should stand for themselves and their fellow beings who are victim of this injustice and cruelty -

"Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves" (Al-Quran)

(ii) Enhancing Moral Accountability of individual

'Enjoining good and forbidding evil' encourages people to enjoin moral behavior and discourages immoral behavior.

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"Do not abandon enjoining good and forbidding evil, otherwise the evil people among you will take charge over you, and then when you will supplicate, you will not be answered."

(Imam Ali (R.A))

(iii) Instilling collective responsibility for promoting social justice

"Amr Bil Ma'roof wa Nahi Anil Munkir" shows that it is the collective responsibility of everyone to fight against injustice and bring ~~social~~ justice in social, political and economic spheres of life.

"Obey me as long as I obey God and His Messenger - But if I disobey God and His Messenger, you owe me no obedience." (Hazrat Abu Bakr (RA)) -

This implies that even if the leader of the nation disobeys Allah's commandments, the society has to get up against him.

(5) Conclusion

To conclude, Amr Bil Ma'roof wa Nahi Anil Munkir is the basic tenet of Islam. It obliges the believer to preserve the morality and forbid the immoral acts. It encourages the believer to support

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all those actions that are approved by Shariah, and disapprove all those actions that forbidden and prohibited by Shariah. It is the collective responsibility of entire ummah to enjoin good and forbid evil. Everyone should play their part against injustice, inequality, oppression and evil acts. Only then can we establish the balanced and ethical society in today's world.

QUESTION # 4

Explain the philosophy and objectives of Salat (Prayer) - How does it contribute to spiritual purification and social discipline?

1- Introduction

"Successful indeed are the believers who are humble in their prayers." (Al-Quran)

Prayer is the second pillar of faith in Islam. It is an act through which an individual develops a special bond and connection with his Creator. There are numerous verses in Quran and Hadith of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) that stresses the importance of prayer in Islam. Through prayer a person asks for mercy of Allah (S.W.T) and seeks acts of kindness and help in the worldly matters. It aims at elevating man to the rank of Mirqat. Salat develops the qualities of piety and patience that helps him to establish cordial relations with family, relatives, friends, poor and orphans. Salat develops a sense of responsibility, punctuality, self discipline and control in men. It also lefts deep impacts on person's spiritual, moral and social life. It purifies the soul of person through fear and love of Allah.

Salat brings a person close to Allah, makes him patient and clean which results in social unity, strength and stability.
It teaches tolerance, equality and co-operation among human beings.

2- Understanding the Philosophy and Objectives of Prayer

2.1 Meaning of Prayer / Salat

The word Salah is an Arabic word which means "bowing", "communicate", "worship" or "prayer".

In literal meaning, the word 'Salah' is a connection or link with Allah (S.W.T) through ritual prayer.

Salat acts as a bridge and removes the gap between man and his Creator. Muslims perform Salat while facing towards Ka'abah in Makkah, including standing, bowing, prostrating, sitting and reading verses of Holy Quran.

2.2 Importance of Salah in light of Quran and Sunnah

(a) Importance of Prayer in Quran

(i) As per the verses of Holy Quran,

واقموا الصلوة واتوا الزكاة واركعوا
مع الراعين -

"Be steadfast in prayer, pay regular charity, and bow down your heads with those who bow down."

(ii) يا ايها الذين امنوا استعينوا بالصبر والصلوة
ان الله مع الصابرين -

"O you who believe! seek assistance through patience and prayer - Surely, Allah is with the patient."

(iii) The Holy Quran says,
"Establish Salats at the declining of sun to the falling of sun, on the darkness of night (Zuhr, Asr, Maghrib, Isha) and the salat of Fajr - Indeed, the recitation of Quran at salat of Fajr is witnessed by the angels -"

(b) Importance of Prayer in Hadith

(i) The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) says,
"He who deliberately neglects obligatory prayer, Allah (S.W.T) is absolved of him -"

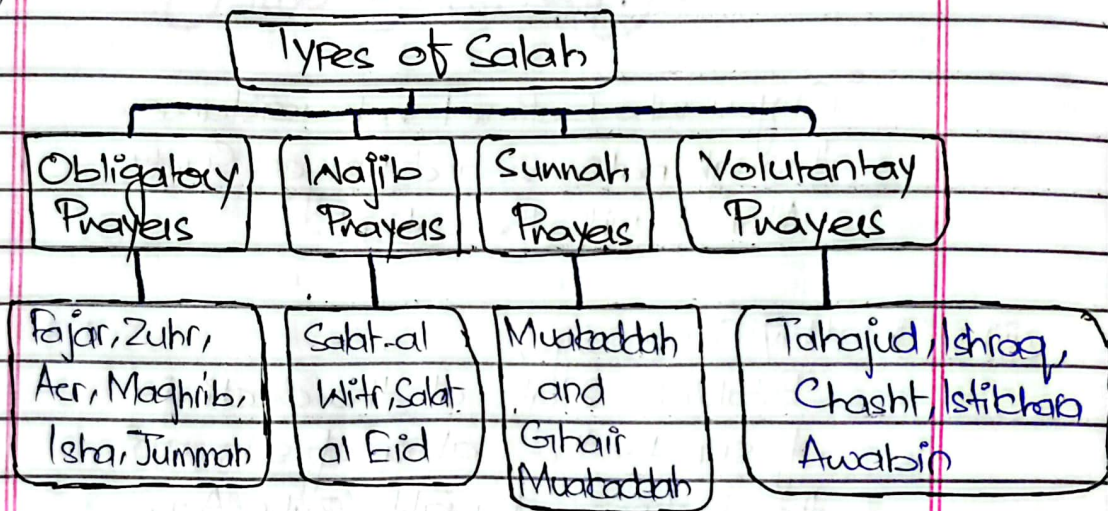
ii) In another hadith, Prophet (PBUH) said,
"Prayer is mainaj for believers"

(iii) Prophet (PBUH) gave happiness of paradise through prayer.
"The Key to Paradise is Salat and the key to Salat is Wudhu."

3 Types of Salat / Prayer

There are four types of Salah.

(i)



4. Impacts of Prayer on Human life and on society-

The impacts of prayer can be classified into spiritual impacts and social impacts:-

(i) Social Impacts

(a) Social Stability

When all people stand in one place with unity, it creates social stability. The society will be able to resolve

problems mutually that damages Muslims roots -

(ii) Mutual Consultation and Cooperation

At mosques, people come together and consult each other at the level of community and Ummah. They discuss various problems and issues pertaining to the society and come together to cooperate which is beneficial for the entire community.

(iii) Social Unity

When people of different colour, caste, creed, language and class come together and stand behind Imam to offer prayer, it creates social unity. In Holy Quran, Allah (SWT) says, "Obey Allah and His Messenger, and fall in no disputes, lest you lose heart and power depart, be patient and preserving."
(Al-Quran) -

(ii) Spiritual Impacts

(i) Check against evil and indecency
Prayer creates fear of God in the heart of human beings and stops them from doing any evil act.

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Allah (S.W.T) says in Holy Quran,
"Indeed, Salat prevents man from
evil and lewdness."

(ii) Purification of believer (Taharat)
It means physical cleanliness and
spiritual purification. Allah (S.W.T) says,
"Surely Allah loves those who turn
to Him and those who purify themselves."
(Al-Quran)

(iii) Greater reward for Congregational
Prayer
When a person performs prayer in
congregation, he is rewarded many time
more than prayer offered in isolation.

Conclusion

To conclude, prayers help establish a
special relationship between man and
God. It is one of the important pillar of
Islam. A person communicates with
his Creator during prayer. Salah is
divided into different categories i.e.
Obligatory, Semi-Obligatory, Sunnah
and Voluntary prayers. It has positive
spiritual, moral and social impacts on
human beings. It creates sense of respon-
sibility, cleanliness, patience and piety
among those offer salah consistently.
Hence, prayer create strong connection
between Allah (S.W.T) and his creature.

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QUESTION # 5

Explain and analyze critically the economic and social significance of Zakat in Islam. How can it address contemporary issues like poverty and inequality?

Introduction

"Successful are those believers who are humble in their prayers, and who shun vain conversations and who pay poor due." (Al-Quran)

Zakat is the third pillar of Islam. The term 'Zakat' has been used in Quran for thirty times. It is an obligatory religious duty of giving alms. Zakat is the system that enhances social prosperity and reduces the economic disparity. It is an act through which money is distributed from rich to the poor, hence promotes distribution of wealth, social justice and equality. When zakat reaches the poor, it ultimately impacts the society's economic stability. The contemporary issues like poverty and inequality in the society can be addressed if the system of Zakat is used and implemented effectively. Zakat creates

circulation of wealth and takes portion of wealth from rich and gives it to the poor and needy segment of the society. This results in poverty alleviation and equality in the society.

Understanding the Concept of Zakat

(i) Literal and Conventional meaning

The word 'Zakat' is derived from the Arabic word root '(زك)' which means 'growth, purification and increase'.

Literal meaning of zakat is 'purification of one's income and wealth from worldly impure ways of acquisition'. According to William Chittick,

"Just as abulation purifies the body, and salat purifies the soul - Zakat purifies the wealth and makes them pleasing to God."

(ii) Real Purpose of Zakat

In Islam, zakat is not only the obligation of giving money but it refines and cleans a person's heart from selfishness and greed. As hoarding is prohibited strictly in Islam, zakat ensures that wealth is circulating within the community and does not

ere segment of society i.e. rich - Islam has strictly prohibited hoarding and violation will result in strict punishment - As Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) said,

"The people that hinder Zakat will be inflicted by God with drought -" (Al-Hodith)

Economic and Social Significance of Zakat in Islam

(i) Special Injunctions of Zakat in Quran
Zakat is the system of circulation and distribution of wealth to balance the economic disparities. It guarantees that the wealth does not stay in the hand of few and the less fortunate receives the assistance -

"Indeed, in their wealth, there is a known right for the beggar and the deprived -" (Al-Quran) -

By providing economic assistance to the poor, Zakat bridges the gap between privileged and unprivileged segments of the society. As Holy Quran says,

"So that it will not merely circulate among the rich from among you -" (Al-Quran)

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(ii) Importance of Zakat in Hadith

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) has encouraged paying zakat and supporting poor, stating "The best charity is to help a poor person become self-sufficient".
(Al-Hadith)

The Prophet (PBUH) used zakat to strengthen the relation with the newly convert tribes, ensuring their stability in faith and social inclusion.

The Prophet (PBUH) said,

"Allah increases the wealth of those who ~~increase~~ gives charity".
(Al-Hadith.)

Zakat as a Source of Reducing Poverty and Inequality

(a) Zakat and Poverty Alliviation

Zakat plays a vital role in bridging the gap between rich and the poor. Zakat is the right owed to the poor which is taken from rich and given to the poor. The recipients of Zakat (Masraf-e-Zakat) are mentioned in Holy Quran.

"Alms are only for poor and needy, and the officials appointed over them, and those whose hearts are to be reconciled, and to free the captives and those in debts and in the way of Allah and wayfaler. - This is an

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obligation from Allah, Allah is all knowing and All wise." (Al-Quran)

five of the eight recipients mentioned in the above verse of Holy Quran are poor.

By giving a portion of wealth to those who need money will reduce extreme poverty and fosters a balanced economy. The Prophet (PBUH) said,

"Zakat is taken from the rich and given to the poor." (Al-Hadith).

(b) Zakat and Financial Equality

Zakat provides an essential support to the most vulnerable segment of the society. It includes unprivileged and marginalized segments such as orphans, widows, old aged people and those struggling with disabilities. It ensures that they get basic necessities of life such as food, healthcare, clothes and education. The financial assistance through Zakat can restore the dignity of marginalized people and make them self-sufficient so that they can contribute towards the society.

The Prophet (PBUH) said to Muadh Bin Jabal when appointed him governor of Yemen, "O Muadh! Collect Zakat from the rich and distribute it to the poor."

(Al-Hadith)

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Conclusion

Zakat is the obligatory duty of the believer to pay a fixed amount of income from his wealth so that it can be distributed among the poor and those who deserve it. Through the system of Zakat, the circulation of wealth is ensured. It bridges the gap between rich and poor.

Zakat can be used to address the contemporary issues in the society, the most of them are poverty and financial inequality. Zakat refines the inner soul and heart of the person from greed and selfishness. Hence, the efficient utilization of the Zakat mechanism can bring financial equality and strengthens the financial foundation of Islamic welfare systems.