

Test 1

Q) What is the difference between Religion and Deen? Describe the importance of Deen in human life.

1) Introduction: The Contrast Between Deen and Religion

The genesis of Religion/Deen can be traced back to the earliest recorded history. Despite contrary to the prevalent misconception, there is actually a subtle difference between Deen and Religion. In order to develop a better understanding of both these concepts let's delve deeper.

2) What is Religion:

Religion is derived from the Latin word 'Religio' which means subjugation of worship. The contextual meaning of Religion is bond between Man and God.

According to Oxford dictionary, Religion is "The belief and worship of a super-human controlling power, especially god or gods."

2.1) Religion according to Dr Israr Ahmed:

Dr Israr, one of the most renowned Islamic scholars of his time whose name warrants not introduction, was of the view that Religion comprised of 3 components: faith, rituals, and certain social functions like death, marriage.

2.2) Religion from the eyes of Edward B. Taylor

Edward B. Taylor, a notable anthropologist whose work is unrivaled in the domains of anthropology, describes religion in the following words:

"The belief in supernatural beings is known as Religion"

He goes on and say:

"This belief came as an explanation for supernatural phenomena, like earthquake, which were beyond the control of humans!"

3) A Cursory glance at the concept of Deen:

The literary meaning of the word Deen denotes dominance or elevation. Contextually it refers to the complete code of life. According to sharia there are four components of Deen: Believing in the sovereignty of Allah, following his commandments, Admitting Islamic jurisprudence, and the belief in punishment and reward mentioned in Islam.

3.i) Definition of Deen set forth by Dr Israr Ahmed:

Dr Israr defines Deen as a composition of 6 elements: Faith, rituals, certain social functions like marriage, social system, justice system, and financial system.

4) Difference between Deen and Religion

Religion refers to the belief in rituals and faith, whereas Deen is the complete code of life which is not solely limited to rituals or faith but

5) Importance of Deen in Human Life:

5.1) It gives humans a purpose:

The contemporary world is intricate and ever evolving. In the grand tapestry of things, it is fairly easy to lose the sense of purpose or question one's existence altogether. Thankfully, the fabric of Islam does not leave humans high and dry. In this regard, the Quran says:

"I have ^{not} created jinn and human except to worship me!"

5.2) It serves as a beacon of hope when all hope is lost:

There remains no ambivalence that our societies are driven by the desire of materialistic things. Moreover, the fast moving world is difficult to keep pace with and could make one end up in despair due to this. In such dire times, Islam serves as the beacon of hope for

many, inculcating a sense of hopefulness.
Regarding this the Quran says:

"Allah does not burden a soul beyond that it can bear".

5.3) Prohibition on committing Suicide:

Much like how Islam inculcates hopefulness in individuals, it also prohibits actions that ~~are~~ can harm themselves. Especially suicide, in the face of adversity, is a grave sin for which is a terrifying punishment, as also mentioned in the Quran:

"And do not kill yourselves. Surely, God is Most Merciful to you."

5.4) People grow more accountable:

Islam edifies one that Allah is all-seeing and therefore all their actions are laid bare before him. This instills a feeling of self accountability in people for they realise that escaping justice is possible in this world but not

in the here after. The Quran cautions people of their in the following words:

"And whoever does an atom's weight of good shall see it. And whoever does an atom's worth of evil will see it."

b) Conclusion:

In a nutshell, there is a striking difference between Religion and Deen, as also embodied in this answer, Deen is an irrefutable facet of human lives which bring countless benefits.

Q1) i) Introduction: A cursory glance at Zakat

Zakat is a pillar of Islam and therefore is indispensable to attain the pleasure of almighty Allah. The literal meaning of Zakat refers to cleanse, contextually it denotes purification of wealth. It is a financial form of worship and is mentioned time and time again in the Holy Quran.

Accentuating the significance of this vital facet of Islam, Quran says:

" O ye who believe! fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that ye may learn self-restraint".

2) Recipients of Zakat:

The beneficiaries of zakat are extensively laid down in Surah-Taubah. Following are the beneficiaries:

Beneficiaries of Zakat

- The Poor
- The Needy
- The administrators of zakat
- To free slaves
- The sympathizers.
- Those who are in debt.
- For the cause of ~~to~~ God
- Those who are stranded during a journey

3) Amount of Zakat:

Zakat is obligatory on surplus wealth. This means the amount remaining after one's necessary expense is deducted. This necessary expense includes, rent, education charges, money for food, and other such expenses of an individual and his family. The amount of Zakat and the threshold ~~for the~~ beyond which Zakat is applicable varies from thing to thing. The following table provides an exhaustive outlook of the amounts:

Nature of Commodity	Rate	Time	Threshold
Metals	2.5%	Yearly	7.5 tola Gold 52/5 tola silver
Agri - Production	5% irrigated 10% arid	Every Yield	N/A
Livestock	Goat 1 Camel 5 Cow ..	Yearly	40 Goats 5 camels 30 cows
Trade in stock	2.5%	yearly	N/A

4) How Poverty can be alleviated with Zakat :

4.1) Allows circulation of wealth :

Zakat allow circulation of the wealth. Not only does it ensure circulations but sees to it that the relatively poor factions of a community receive it. This can help the needy to survive and also might empower them to start their own.

4.2) Eliminates one's lust for money :

The aim of Zakat is to remove the lust of money that individuals harbour. This can go a long way in the distribution of wealth in a community. Zakat serves as an impetus to give more and move for the sake of Allah. As the practice proliferates the society can witness unprecedented change. Holy Quran also encourages the believers to give more in charities in the following words:

"Allah destroys interest and gives increase for charities, And Allah does not like any ungrateful evildoer."

4.3) Giving Zakat instills a feeling of brotherhood:

Not only does Zakat remove the lust for money, it also instills a feeling of brotherhood and compassion. When people give Zakat, they get a first hand experience of the plight of their fellow muslim brothers. This induces sympathy and they try and contribute more and more towards alleviating the predicament of the less fortunate. Prophet ^{Pbuh} also emphasised on taking care of fellow muslim brothers in several hadiths; one notable being:

The parable of believers in their compassion, mercy, affection, is ~~the~~ that of a body. When any limb aches, the whole body reacts with sleeplessness and fever."

5) Conclusion :

To encapsulate, zakat is the third pillar of Islam and its significance cannot be overstated. It has vital importance, not only for an individual but for the entire community. Hence Muslims should adhere to this cardinal pillar.