

Chapter 2

Introduction to Islam

Contents

What is religion?

Meaning of word “Deen” (Religion)

The importance of religion:

The importance of religion for the individual:

The importance of religion for the society:

Religion as a liberating force:

The message of all the Prophets:

Evidence of God’s existence:

What is religion?

- A religion is a set of beliefs and actions generally held by a number of persons. Religion refers to both the personal practices and group rituals and commands relating to communal Faith and to group rituals and communication stemming from shared conviction.
- Religion is often described as a communal system of belief focusing on a system of thought, unseen power, that is considered to be supernatural, sacred, divine or of the highest truth. Moral codes, practices, values, institutions, traditions and rituals are often traditionally associated with the core belief.

- The study of the religion is the study of mankind. Religion touches the deepest feelings of the human heart and human society.
- Religion can take many forms or aspects. These include beliefs, ritual actions, ethical actions formation of religious communities.

Meaning of word “Deen” (Religion)

- **The Day of Judgement and Hereafter**

“And we used to deny the Day of Judgement” (74:46)

“Master of the Day of Judgement” (1:4)

- **The law and constitution**

“Thus did We plan for Joseph (Yousuf). He could not take his brother by the law of the king except that Allah willed it (so)” (12:76)

- **The best obedience and worship**

“Who can be better in religion than one who submits his whole self to Allah-----” (4:125)



- **Each ones own belief and way of life**

“To you be your Way, and to me mine”
(109:6)

- **The creed and what people believe in.**

“If anyone desires a religion other than Islam (submission to Allah), never will it be accepted of him-----” (3:85)

“The religion before Allah is Islam (submission to His Will)” (3:19)

“----- this day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion”
(5:3)

The importance of religion.

There have never been a nation ancient be or modern without a set of beliefs or religion. No doubt humanity in the present era has advanced rapidly in the fields of science, technology and materialistic progress. This change was accompanied by values and ideas, which led to conflicts and disputes.

Religion is an instinctive tendency found with the creation of the human being. It is a natural feeling of connection between the human being and his Creator.

Religion is also a social phenomenon that is not exclusive to one community and not the other. Its importance covers both psychological and social aspects of life.



- **The importance of religion for the individual**

- **Humanistic need:**

Allah created all human beings with the need for belief and worship. Thus, Allah has taken such an oath from all humans.

“Am I not your Lord(Who cherishes and sustains you)?” They said: “Yea! We do testify!(this)-----
(7:172)

Allah then sent prophets and messengers to remind people of their oath and aim of their existence. Therefore, to claim that religion is of no importance to humanity is unfounded. In fact, the history of humanity shows that there is no time in which mankind has lived without religion.

Moreover, human being have desire and needs that are required to be maintained and organized by religion. When he is faced by a universal phenomenon, he would rush to his Lord the Saviour.

o Intellectual need:

What we call “religion” is the natural outcome of man’s intellectual and biological constitution. Man consists of body and soul that both need something to fulfill and make them survive. In this way, the provisions of the soul are known to be faith. Man is unable to explain to himself the mystery of life, birth, death, infinity or eternity. Religion satisfies the highest human intellectual theoretical needs.

Being able to put an answer to reassure the heart, particularly with regard to the unseen. Answers to such questions could not be derived from the human mind only, as they will be incomplete answers since no one could provide comprehensive answers to such questions such as religion.

Islam is a religion that lays emphasis on the use of mind, thinking and foresight. It then requests the human to analyze and consider the route towards faith, and verifies illogical imitation to the tradition of parents and grandparents without judging or examining them.

Islam made reason and freedom of choice the basis for the consideration of faith and belief as there is no compulsion in Islam. For compulsion, does not lead to conviction of mind or tranquility of heart.



Spiritual need:

Since the human being is a combination of both mind and spirit, his psychological emotions can not be satisfied except through religion, as religious belief, links the human being to his Creator and consequently assurance of faith.

“Those who believe, and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of Allah: for without doubt in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find satisfaction” (13:28)

- In today's materialistic world, religion is much needed for anxious and expanding
- psychological problems that face humanity.

Religion as a liberating force:

Religion teaches the human being that life and death belong only to Allah; it thus, liberates him from believing that anyone else would be able to harm or enslave him. Moreover, religion liberates the mind from all types of myths as it answers all questions of life.

Religion is the greatest liberator of human beings, from all aspects of oppression, fear and tyranny. There is no doubt that the greatest concerns for human are fear on livelihood and for life, both of which are absolutely linked to the belief in the grace of Allah.

- **The importance of religion for the society:**

We need to highlight the importance of religion for the society. There is no such force that is equal in its impact as religion in ensuring respect of law and social cohesion and stability.

Religion also leads to a rapprochement between individual values and those of the society, values of cooperation and solidarity to achieve the interests of individual and society alike. Religion gives good ideal, explains the purpose and objectives of the society in which all can share.

“And hold fast, all together, by the rope which Allah (stretches out for you) and be not divided among yourselves; and remember with gratitude Allah’s favour on you; for you were enemies and He joined your hearts in love-----” (3:103)

Religion Puts everyone on an equal footing where the main significances is the nearness to Allah, not to kinship or family ties. Finally it determines the concept of happiness at the end, and that good actions will be rewarded while bad would be accounted for.

- **What is Islam?**

This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed My favour unto you, and have chosen for you as religion al-Islam (5:3)

In Arabic the word Islam means submission and surrendering in peace to the will of Allah Almighty. A Muslim consequently, is one who submits to the will of Allah. The root of this Arabic word salaam means peace. As such, the religion of Islam teaches that in order to achieve true peace and tranquility for mind and heart, one must submit to Allah and live according to His revealed Law.

The religion of Islam began in the Arabian Peninsula; however, the majority of the Muslims in today's world are non-Arabs. There are Asian, European, African or American; there are Muslims of all colours and races. There are over 1.5 billion Muslims today that makes one-fifth of humanity. •

- **The message of all the Prophets:**

Islam is not a new religion, but a continuation of the simple and powerful message of pure monotheism revealed by Allah throughout history. It is same eternal message throughout the ages to all of Allah's Prophets and Messengers. For this reason, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was not the founder of a new religion, as many people mistakenly think, but he was the final Prophet of Islam. "Islam besides being a religion is also a social order and a complete code of life."

- **Evidence of God's existence:**

- i. Evidence of nature:**

The first and foremost evidence is human nature that exists in all mankind, the human is inclined to believe in Allah. However, man is surrounded by many things, such as customs, traditions and distorted beliefs that corrupt this nature. This evidence can be more witnessed in the human being when he is in distress or difficulty; he would immediately seek Allah's support.

ii. Evidence of causation:

It is rational and logical that any creation must have a creator, Allah says:

“Were they created of nothing, or were they themselves the creators Or did they create the heavens and the earth? Nay, they have no firm belief.” This is called the law of causality as nothing happens by itself as it does not have a sufficient reason in its nature for its existence. If the people did not create heavens or earth, and if it did not create itself, and if heaven and earth were not created by anything, there is no explanation other than that there must be a

• Creator that is Allah

iii. Evidence of universe:

Any one who wonders about the universe can see the greatness of Allah's creation, in every part of this vast universe, in its skies, lands, human, animals and all creatures.

“See you not that Allah makes the clouds move gently, then joins them together, then makes them into a heap” –Then you see rain issued forth from their midst-----”

“It is Allah who causes the seed-grain and date-stone to split and sprout. He causes the living to issue from the dead-----”



iv. Evidence of guidance:

Allah not only created, but also guided the creatures to play their role and functions that Allah placed for them in the universe.

“And your Lord taught the Bee to build its cells in hills, on trees, and in (men’s) habitations; Then to eat of all the produce (of the earth) and find with skill the spacious paths of its Lord: there issues from within their bodies a drink of varying colours, wherein is healing for men: verily in this is a Sign for those who give thoughts.” (16:68-69)

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