

## **Religion and its Importance**

Having a Latin origin, the word “religion” means “binding together.” Literally, religion is a bond between a religious devotee and his God. This devotion is all about rituals and faiths.

**James George Frazer**, a sociologist says,

“Religion is a belief in powers superior to man, which are believed to direct and control the course of nature and of human life.”

So, the simplest definition of religion is to believe in the supernatural and place it sacred or divine and practicing certain values and rituals associated with that belief.

People have different religions or belief systems across the world which can be easily categorized into two categories:

- the divine or revealed religions
- the non-divine or man-made religions

Non-divine religions are associated with great thinkers, philosophers and reformers. Out of many religions Hinduism and Buddhism are the oldest. Rest of the non-divine religions are branches of these two.

While divine religions are those which are revealed from God to different prophets. Three of them are still in practice that include Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

“**Deen**” is a system of life in which human beings consciously surrender themselves to the sovereignty of a higher authority and live a life of total obedience under the system given by that higher authority. People gain rewards through obedience and save themselves from the punishment.

Deen is all embracing term which includes religious-socio-politico-economic system. It touches upon the material as well as spiritual dimensions of human existence and insists that all our thoughts and deeds should be performed with God consciousness.

### **Difference between Deen and Religion**

Religion is a bond between a religious devotee and his God or gods. This devotion is all about rituals and faiths while, Deen is about the entire submission of man to an absolute sovereign.

Religion mostly deals only with private affairs of life whereas, Deen covers both individual as well as collective spheres of life.

Mostly religions focus either on worldly life or after life while, Deen develops connection and balance between worldly life and life here-after.

Religions are either totally man-made or manipulated by man whereas, Deen is divine.

Except for Islam, almost none of the world religions has standardized/ unified sources of knowledge and guidance.

### **Islam- A Deen**

The arabic word “Islam” is derived from a word meaning “peace”, and Islam as a deen stands for willing submission to Allah (SWT). One cannot achieve the peace of mind and soul until he does not surrender himself in front of Allah and live his life according to His laws.

Islam is the same eternal message revealed through the ages to all of God’s Prophets and Messengers. All of the prophets including Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, Solomon, Jesus, and Ismail (peace be upon them) conveyed this main message that there is only One True God and He alone is to be worshipped. God says in the Quran,

**“We did not send before you (O Mohammad) any messenger but We revealed to him: ‘none has the right to be worshipped except I, therefore worship Me.’” (Quran 21:25)**

However, the true message of these prophets was either lost or got corrupted over time and hence lost its credibility to guide the people to the right path. Therefore, 600 years after Jesus, God purified the lost message by sending the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) with His final revelation, the Holy Quran, towards all the mankind. It was the revival of humanity.

Since the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) was the final prophet, God Himself has promised to preserve His last revealed words so that it would remain the source of guidance for all humanity till the Last Day. It is now imperative for everyone to believe and follow this final message from God. God Almighty says in the Quran,

**“We have not sent you (O Mohammad) but to all mankind as a giver of good news and as a warner, but most people do not know.” (Quran 34:28)**

**“Whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted of him, and in the Hereafter, he will be one of the losers.” (Quran 3:85)**

The word “Muslim” means one who submits to the will of God, regardless of his/her color, race, gender, nationality or ethnic background. Hence, any person who is ready to submit to the will of God is eligible to become a Muslim.

When the term Deen is used for “Islam”, it obviously means a system of life where Almighty Allah (SWT) is worshipped and obeyed as absolute Sovereign, not just in the narrow religious sense, but in a manner that includes all aspects of human life.

This implies (i) Faith, (ii) doing right, (iii) eschewing wrong and being an example to others to eschew wrong. Therefore, Islam lives, not for itself, but for mankind.

The essence of true and authentic Islamic thought consists of the idea that it is not enough to practice Islam in the personal life only, but that the teachings of the Quran and those of the Sunnah need also be implemented in their totality in the social, economic, and political fields. The ultimate goal is to achieve the domination of the True way of life (Deen al-Haq), so that the Islamic System of Social, religious, economic and political justice can be established on earth.

### **Importance of religion:**

The subject matter of every religion is the well-being of mankind. Religion is important for people because:

- It offers opportunities for personal reflection.
- It gives a basis for the meaning of life.
- It can also provide a sense of community and connection to tradition.
- Religion helps in understanding of the spiritual, moral, social & cultural questions that surface again & again in people’s lives.
- It guides one to make decisions/choices and come out of confusions.
- It gives people peace of mind, hope and motivation.
- Religion also provides an ethical and behavioral framework for mankind.
- Some research even suggests that Religion can also play a role in helping people cope with mental health conditions.

**Conclusion:** We can confidently conclude that to believe in a religion is unavoidable fact of human nature. Religion helps humanity in multiple ways and makes considerable contribution to well-being of humans and other creatures.