

Core Curriculum

1 God, Religion and Islam: An Introduction

1.4 What is “Religion” and What’s the Point of it Anyways?

Question: What is religion?

Answer: A way of life, a constitutive activity in the world

Question: What is the function of religion?

Answer: There is no agreement on this, but the Islamic view is that it functions as a system of knowing and desiring that guides and determines all of one’s ways of looking at and acting in the world and all its various commitments and ways of organizing.

Question: Why is religion failing?

Answer: There is no agreement on this, but according to the Islamic view, religion, if seen as a way of life, is not failing. What is failing is our way of life in the form of a relationship with God.

Question: Why are we losing faith then according to Islam?

Answer: There is never a simplistic answer to these things. But one major reason is our state of heedlessness caused by the plenitude of distractions in the modern world, including TV, computers, internet, blind pursuit of a career etc.

Question: What is the Arabic word for religion?

Answer: Dīn