

## Preface

Does this world have a Creator and God or has it been created by itself without any cause? If there is a God then what are His attributes and works? Does God assign an obligation for us, or are we not without some form of responsibility? Were the messengers truthful in their claims or not? Is it possible that after this world there exists another world whereby a human being would see punishment for his/her deeds?

The human faculty of reason, in accordance with his primitive nature and special creation, desires to find out about these realities, remove curtains from these mysteries; provide correct answers for these inquiries and many more alike. The human faculty of reason possesses this distinction in it whereby it can distinguish between truth and falsehood and naturally is inclined to discover the realities and causes of things, and until it rests upon an absolute certainty, it does not feel comfortable.

These sorts of topics are called principles of religion (*'usul-e-din*). The principles of religion are topics which are relevant to the thought and soul of human beings, reason and intellect follow it, and deeds and movement of human beings spring forth from its fountainhead accordingly. In the principles of religion (*'usul-e-din*) imitation or following is not allowed and everyone is obliged to discover them through his reason and intellect. If a human being, for his beliefs, succeeds in creating a stable and firm groundwork, his intellect and soul feel at ease; he rescues it from internal anxiety, bewilderment, and wandering, and in that case he could continue his life with his conscience at ease and in comfort.

## Childhood and Youth

The best time for nourishment is the period of childhood and adolescence. The fresh page of a mind of a child and a youth is like a photographic film that has not yet been exposed to the light of illumination and is therefore ready for acceptance of any picture upon it.

These simple minds, if they could be nourished in a correct manner and if correct thoughts and beliefs could be presented to them with reason and logic, would make a dent upon their sensitive soul and thus would become a permanent temperament of their essence. Such individuals, no matter what environment they are encountered with and whomever they socialized with, would not become deviated and lost.

If they happened to be in an impious environment, they would not accept the color of that community; instead they would try to change it to their own color. Unfortunately, this large group has been deprived of correct religious nourishment, and has not yet been paid attention to the way they deserve. Normally they have acquired the religious beliefs from their parents without reason, logic, and program. It is due to this very reason that their faith and belief has not been laid down upon a solid foundation and they do not possess a stable groundwork.

Secondly: They have assumed some of the matters which are baseless and futile as definite religious realities, believed in them, and with the same illogical and initial beliefs and thoughts, enter in primary schools, higher secondary schools and from there into the university environment where they associate with the people of different belief and thoughts. Since the basis of their faith is not firm, or with a slight doubt and criticism, they become easily confused and perplexed, and from the point of knowledge and wisdom have not reached to the extent that they could distinguish truth from falsehood and could separate good from bad.

Therefore due to this reason they become cynical with respect to the real religion and remain in the state of bewilderment not knowing what their obligation is supposed to be. Then in that case either they turn their face completely away from religion or at least the basis of their moral ethics or deeds start trembling, causing them to act reckless with respect to their religion. The result of this negligence and incorrect nourishment could be seen explicitly by all and there is no one who could think of a solution in rescuing these innocent individuals from the valley of deviation.

## **Everyone is Responsible**

Against this greatest danger that threatens the forthcoming generations into irreligiousness and weakness of belief, all individuals of the community are responsible. Guardians of religion, clergies, fathers, mothers, teachers and scholars, speakers, writers and wealthy people, all are responsible.

Yes, we are all responsible and if we do not discharge our obligation in this regard, the future generation would send curses upon us and we would be held accountable on the Day of Judgment.

We must draw a comprehensive plan and perfect program of implanting correct beliefs with reason and logic inside the brains of the simple minded; and must wage a campaign of confrontation against deviated and wrong beliefs. Educational books with simple language should be prepared for them; libraries must be established for this task; books freely or inexpensive should be provided to them and they should be motivated to read these books.

## **The Present Book**

The present book has been especially written for the young generation and youths to teach them religious education and the following points have been considered in this book:

1. The contexts while being simple are based upon reason and rationale. Regarding intellectual matters rational reasons have been presented; topics regarding obedience and religion have been presented in accordance with narrations and verses of the Holy Qur'an; if required the source of reference has been mentioned in footnotes, but for the sake of brevity in some topics the sources have not been mentioned.
2. Regarding the date of births and demises of the Holy Prophet (S) and Infallible Imams (a.s.) there are differences of opinion but for the sake of concision one of the quotations has been selected and others have not been mentioned.
3. The writer has tried his best to make the intellectual matters relatively simple so they could be comprehended by all; efforts have been made to avoid usage of philosophical terminology and description of lengthy and tiring arguments.
4. Doubtful, weak and tempered, and less useful matters have not been mentioned.
5. In this book matters have been written whose knowing is compulsory upon every Muslim and whereby the Religion of Islam has been described in a summarized manner in order to prepare the minds of readers to refer to more comprehensive books and journals of the religious authorities (ris'alah 'Amaliyah written by mar'aji'). Especially regarding branches of the religion (furu'e-din) all of them have not been mentioned or have been mentioned in summary. The context of the book could be classified into the following three categories:

First: The beliefs (Aqa'yid) i.e. matters and affairs which are related to the intellect and faculty of reason a human being, rational reasons rule over them and imitation is not allowed.

Second: Moral ethics ('Akhl'aq), i.e. the matters which are relevant to the human self and sentiments, controlling desires of the self, making one's self moderate and placing one's self upon the straight path of humanity.

Third: Branches of the Religion (Furu'e-din): i.e. mandatory obligations and practical instructions, which are relevant to the human body and what should be done.

In the end I request the readers and intellectuals that if they have opinions or find faults in the book, they should inform the writer so that it could be utilized in the next edition.

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