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On The Path of Religion

In a class at the Jaffery Primary School of Mombasa, it was time for religious instruction. The subject was: The meaning and benefits of following a religion. This is how the lesson went.

Pupil: Please, Sir, tell us the meaning of religion.

Teacher: Religion is a collection of beliefs. It lays down the rules of character, how to deal with your family members as well as with other people, It also teaches us rules concerning money matters. They have been taught to us by the Prophets who were messengers of God, sent for the guidance of Mankind.

Pupil: May I know what benefit do we get from following a religion?

Teacher: By following the teachings of true religion, a person becomes happy in this world as well as in the next one.

Pupil: Please, Sir, tell us what religion teaches us.

Teacher: The teachings of religion mainly consist of:

1) Beliefs: To believe in One God, who created this world, the Sun, the Moon, the Stars, and other planets and everything in them. Because of his kindness, he did not leave human beings without guidance. He sent Prophets to guide them to the right path so that they may fulfill the duties he has laid down. Those who follow the teachings of the Prophets would be successful and happy in this as well as the next world.

2) Character: Religion teaches us to be good and kind to everyone, to love everyone, to respect parents and teachers, to seek useful knowledge, to protect our rights and those of others and to live moderately.

3) Social and Economic Guidance: A perfect religion lays down rules about how to behave and deal with people when they do wrong. It also teaches us rules about money matters, how one should earn one's living, how one should take care of the poor and needy relatives, what type of business is allowed.

4) Worship: Religion teaches us that we pray to God and fast, so that by such actions we remember God and purify our Body and Mind.

We should obey God only and not follow people. God has created all of us. Therefore he knows better what is good for us. He has laid down a code of life for our benefit. Therefore, it is in our interest to follow it.

Pupil: May I know, Sir, how belief in a religion affects our lives?

Teacher: Belief in religion not only affects a person's spirit or soul but also his body and action.

A person who believes in one God, acts differently from a person who does not believe in God. He who believes in God cannot at any time become proud, because he knows that whatever he has acquired has been given to him by God and God can take it back whenever he wishes.

He does not look down upon other people as he knows that all of them have been created by God in the same way as he was created.

He does not bow down before anyone but God. He knows that everything has been created by God and he provides for all our needs. He alone is worthy of being worshipped.

He also believes in life in the next world and always tries to do good and refrains from doing bad. The better his deeds, the better will be his life in the next world.

A person who believes in God does all the good work even if he is not paid for it or appreciated by others. He continues to do good to others. He sacrifices his time, money and energy in serving people for the sake of God, as this pleases God. He does not become selfish.

Thus belief is connected with character and character with actions. They are all connected to each other.

Pupil: Now Sir can you tell us what would happen if a person did not believe in religion?

Teacher: A person who does not believe in God and life in the next world does not know who created him, why he was created and what is the purpose of his life. He is like a traveller who is lost and moves around aimlessly.

When such a person falls into trouble, he has no where to look for help. If he wants anything, he has no one from whom he can ask to fulfill his wishes.

A person who believes in religion asks for help from God when he is in difficulties. He asks God to fulfill his wishes. He is sure that God will help him and will grant him his desires if they are good for him. But a person who does not believe in God has no one.

A non-believer acts according to his whims. He is most of the time selfish. He is not prepared to help

others for he does not expect to get God's reward for his sacrifices for the trouble he takes for others.

His only aim in life is to find happiness for himself at all cost. He does not know what is the purpose of his life. He does not hesitate to tell lies, steal, hurt others and do all sorts of bad things; if these actions will gain something for him. He does not know that God will punish him for his bad deeds in the next world.

A person who believes in religion is afraid of God and will not do bad things. He knows that any difficulty that comes to him in this world is meant to test his faith in God. He, therefore, faces it patiently and prays for God's help. He knows that this will please God and he will be rewarded for it by God in the next world.

The bell rang. It was time for another lesson. When the children went home, they fully realised the need for a religion. Since then, they respected their religious teachings more and more and made every effort to follow them. In so doing they became happier and successful in life.

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